CLING *of the* CLAY

MILTON HAYES

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Cling of the Clay

By

Milton Hayes

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TO YOU

GERMAINE

WITH ALL MY HEART I DEDICATE

THIS TALE

MILTON

BOOK I

CHAPTER I

I

IT was the time of year when yellow leaves fall heavily: a hazy October eventide, the blood-red sun dying behind a mist. It was the time when doubts return, when melancholy rears its head.

Trees dripped—as if weeping, weeping tears of infinite regret for those big yellow leaves that fell so heavily. A few short months ago those leaves had been tender green things—hopeful, joyous promises—sap-laden emblems of unending life; now they fell, to be trodden into the soft moist loam, to become part of the soil . . . again.

The river was swift after heavy rain, copper-colored in the veiled sunset.

Boys were searching under the horse-chestnuts for conkers, shouting and struggling for possession.

One boy, weary of conkers, was testing the speed of the river's flow with bits of twig. Suddenly he called to the others. He swore he had seen a face.

"Wajja mean, face? How could it be a face? Well, where?"

"In the water—I seen it—bobbin'; goin' under and comin' up again."

"Wassorter face?"

"A yooman face."

"Face! Well, if it's a face, where's the arms and legs an' thin's? You can't have a face without a body."

They peered into the swollen waters.

Something dark, some sort of cloth, was caught by an overhanging bough, swaying and flapping. And where the water ran from the cloth, above the surface, it looked like velvet.

Two laborers passed, saw the boys staring; they too stared.

The face theory gathered weight. The two men allowed it looked "powerful like a face." The boy who had first detected the thing assumed an air, took up a position beside the men, looked like a landed proprietor. Explained how he had discovered it, and spat importantly. One of the men wore a beard. After a prolonged stare he (the man with the beard) declared it to be *very* like a face.

The discoverer gazed scornfully at the other boys.

If the man with the beard thought it was a face . . . well . . . A great big beard he had, and he was old—thirty, maybe, or seventy—old anyhow: an authority. Surely he ought to know.

After much holding-on, and shouting, and warning not to let go, the dark flappy object was hauled to the bank. They all stood around, staring at it, speculating, spitting. . . .

It was the body of a woman.

II

William Fayle, brickmaker, sat down to his mid-day meal, cut a hunk of bread from a cottage-loaf, and poured out a glass of ale from a stone jug. A pretty young woman, dark and of Latin type, waited on him.

Having served him, she joined him at the table. For a time they both ate in silence. At last the young woman spoke.

"I called on Dr. Small," she said, toying pensively with her fork.

"Well?" the man queried non-committally, on the defensive.

"It's true," said the woman, looking steadily across at him. "It's just as I thought—and—and there's no way out of it—and I knew before he told me—I'm over three months gone."

The brickmaker continued to eat in silence. The woman pushed her plate away from her.

When he had finished the man put on his cap and went out without a word to the pretty young woman. As he passed a row of mean cottages a puppy dog made a playful attack on his feet. He gave the little dog a savage kick

that sent it away yelping, and through his set teeth he muttered: "Oh, blast! Women are all alike! To hell with 'em all! To hell with 'em!"

III

That evening, as William Fayle returned home from work, the pretty young woman opened the door to him and excitedly thrust a news sheet into his hands.

"Look, Bill, look," she said, pointing to a small paragraph at the foot of a column. "Suppose it was Liddy?"

He entered the living room, sat down in a chair by the fireplace, and read the item:

"SCHOOLBOYS' GRUESOME DISCOVERY.

". . . taken to the mortuary at St. Mary's Hospital. The body, which was found to be in a very decomposed state, is that of a woman about thirty years of age. The clothing bears no mark of identification of any kind whatever. A postmortem examination will be made. Inquest—Friday, County Coroner's Court."

As the man finished reading, a babel of children's voices came from the backyard.

"Well?" demanded the woman.

"I've got to think of the children," he said sullenly.

The woman stood over him. "Yes," she retorted sharply, "and you've got to think of me, too." She pointed to the paragraph and went on: "That might just as well be Liddy as anybody else. And I tell you this, Bill Fayle: *it's going to be Liddy!*"

He shifted uneasily in his chair and stared gloomily into the fire.

IV

Vide the *Chester and County Weekly Times:*

"The body of the woman was identified by the husband, William Fayle, brickmaker of Manchester, and Annabel Quinn, cousin of the deceased. The garments were recognized as those worn on the day of the deceased woman's unaccountable departure from home over a month ago. It appears that the deceased had been suffering for some considerable time under a strange melancholic

depression, and had, on several occasions, threatened to put an end to her life. The bereaved husband was greatly affected by the ordeal of the inquest and had obvious difficulty in giving evidence. The Coroner regretted the necessity of the inquiry and expressed his sympathy in the witness's sad loss. Verdict: Suicide while of unsound mind."

That was in the autumn of 1859: the month of October.

* * * * *

Ten days later William Fayle and Annabel Quinn were quietly married at the registry office in Ashton Road and, shortly after, the brickmaker moved with his four boys and his new wife into a much larger house in Mayrick Street near Belle Vue.

In the April following the new Mrs. William Fayle presented her husband with a son.

CHAPTER II

I

WILLIAM FAYLE feared neither man nor devil. He professed to fear God—and didn't. He pretended not to fear his wife—and did. He was a huge man, strong, selfish, and lustful. What he wanted he took—and he helped himself liberally.

If any man opposed him, he knocked the man down. His fortune was made by knocking men down.

It was his proud boast that he had never been compelled to knock down the same man twice.

As a young man working for a daily wage in the brickfield, he had successively, and at intervals, knocked down his foreman—and taken the foreman's job; his manager—and taken the manager's job; and, finally, his boss—whereupon he started in business for himself and practiced on his own employees.

The knocking-down policy was relentlessly pursued throughout the brickmaker's whole career. He knocked down his workmen, his servants, and his sons; and he obtained obedience.

His fortune was acquired without subtlety. In the prosperous '60's and '70's the population of Manchester grew more quickly than the supply of housing accommodation.

Industry was thriving.

Business premises—offices, foundries, factories, and mills—were springing up everywhere. South-East Lancashire appeared to be the industrial center of the world. Villages and towns spread out, linked up, and spread out again, until a quarter of a big county began to look like one great workshop.

Lancashire goods—cotton cloths and machinery of all descriptions—were every day finding new markets abroad. Mills and foundries could not be erected and equipped rapidly enough. Iron and coal were being torn from out

the bowels of the county and shot up to the service of the toilers on the surface level at the utmost pace that those below could endure.

Railways—main lines, branch lines, sidings, and private lines—radiated, from Manchester as the chief center, like a giant spider's web. Countless thousands gave their sinew and their sweat for ten, twelve, fourteen—even sixteen—hours a day that the exacting tyrant Trade might boom, and, incidentally, that womenfolk and little ones might have bread, and later, as the boom lasted, a German cottage piano in the front parlor.

Trade grew on trade. One industry battened on another. Golden sovereigns multiplied. Overseas orders flooded into Lancashire with every mail. India, China, Honolulu, and Timbuctoo were clamoring for calicoes. The song of the overseas trade was echoed by spindle, shuttle, and loom. Factory sirens and hooters joined in the great refrain. The clatter of wooden clogs on Lancashire cobbles added a plaintive human query. The heavy clanging of boiler works spoke of iron necessity, and the cry of the child in the cradle answered the eternal "Why?" of it all.

Business men took risks, and won, and learned to laugh at debt. Credit swelled and puffed itself. Orders continued to pour in, and bankers lent at ease.

Masters grew rich, extended operations, enlarged premises, and employed more "hands." The "hands" worked longer hours and feared unemployment less. Men enslaved themselves to trade, to money, and to one another. Women became more prolific.

Much beer was consumed.

The daily press rose up and commanded the world to provide premises and homes. Build! Build!! BUILD!!!

Men in trains told each other: "We must have more scope. We must extend. We must grapple with this thing called 'boom,' and squeeze the very essence out of it. Give us foundries. Give us factories. Give us workmen's dwellings. Build! Build!! BUILD!!!"

So the world began to build, more than ever before—feverishly, aimlessly, unthinkingly. Workshops were conjured up anywhere and everywhere, without regard to facilities of transport or the black smoke nuisance or other people's rights and usages.

Men built who knew nothing whatever of building. The outer districts and suburbs of Manchester were raped and desecrated by ravenous hordes of speculators, devoid of decency and with thoughts only for quick profits.

Meadows that had delighted the eye in Longsight, Rusholme, and Greenheys, became suddenly the battle grounds of jerry builders; jungles of scaffoldings; swamps of lime; morasses of mortar.

Long rows of hideous four-roomed cottages spread like evil fungi all about the environs, and, before the wall-paper could dry, they had become the eating, sleeping, and breeding dens of countless manual workers, who gladly paid from four to seven shillings and eightpence a week for the privilege of becoming identified with a number in a provisionally-named street. These new streets remained unpaved and inadequately drained for months and years, and, in rainy seasons, looked like muddy canals.

In the magic spell of the boom, William Fayle fashioned his yellow clay into good red bricks—and made a fortune.

In time the demand forced him to extend. The four-acre brickfield in Grey Mare Lane grew and grew until it reached Hyde Road and measured a square mile.

Every morning he rose at four-thirty, breakfasted enormously on beefsteak, eggs, and old ale, and started work exactly at half-past five.

He supervised every detail personally and could calculate his daily output to a brick. No shirker could ever hope to outwit him. The workmen were as plastic in his hands as the clay itself. He drove them like galley-slaves, laughed at their fatigue, knocked them down whenever they objected to working as hard as he did, and paid them handsomely.

Strange is the way of man; they respected him and rendered full service.

His bricks were good and cheap. He used to declare: "Any fool can mold a brick. But there aren't ten men living who know how to fire it."

William Fayle—or Bill Fayle as he was sometimes called, or Bloody Bill Fayle as he was more often called (behind his back), probably because of the plethoric embellishment which lent such complete conviction to what-

ever views he voiced—was certainly one of the ten brick-firing geniuses; and it was to the firing he particularly trained his four eldest sons, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

Bricks were ordered by the hundred thousand and paid for at the rate of one pound and sevenpence per thousand. William Fayle knocked off the odd sevenpence for cash. On every thousand bricks he reckoned a clear profit of three and sixpence.

Unable to cope with orders fast enough, he acquired sixty-feet clay rights of vast tracts of territory in Long-sight, Rusholme, Ardwick, and Hulme, delegating responsibility for each brickfield to one of his sons.

He himself continued to manage the original holding—the great stretch from Grey Mare Lane to Hyde Road—to which he had referred, by way of belittling its value when negotiating tenure, as a "bloody wilderness." The appellation tickled the popular fancy, and it stuck.

As his fortune increased, his wife insisted on bettering their way of living, and he bought a spacious home in Burnage Lane—Cringle Elms—a lordly place: lawns, glass-houses, stables, lodge—everything. Numerous servants were engaged to complicate his existence. He hated them intensely.

Mrs. Fayle, a handsome woman with a will of her own and the tongue of the devil, aspired to social recognition. She paid her calls and went about her shopping in a private brougham, with driver and footman completely liveried in cockaded top-hats and bear-skin tippets. But William Fayle remained a man of simple tastes, and the only luxury he allowed himself was a heavy-weight saddle horse, on which he used to ride to and from the works.

The best things in life, according to the burly brick-maker, were what he called "the six B's," which he explained in a home-made rime that passed with many as profound philosophy:

"Beer, Beef, Bread,
'Baccy, Bible, Bed."

He believed heavily in the Psalms, and was prepared at all times to knock down any man who didn't. God lurked

somewhere in the dark corners of his imagination like a sort of distant relation of his first wife—a rather disapproving personage who objected to his eating peas with a knife, and who was sternly opposed to the use of the sanguinary epithet except in matters of purely business interest.

He was very fond of old ale, and hated Roman Catholics.

William Fayle, brickmaker.

II

Ernest, the youngest of the five sons and the only child of the brickmaker's second wife, was spared the fate of being dedicated to life service in the brickyards by a stroke of luck and the will of his mother.

One September day, when Ernest was rising eight, Mrs. Fayle took him as a special treat for an afternoon walk to the "Wilderness."

That morning a tragedy had occurred, a tragedy destined to make history, thus:

The Black Maria, conveying the two Fenians Deasey and Kelly, on remand, to Belle Vue Jail, had been waylaid and attacked by a score of armed Irishmen at the point where Fayle's brickfield abutted on to Hyde Road, just by the railway arch. The horses had been hamstrung, the driver and escort wounded, and Sergeant Brett—the police officer in charge—shot dead in cold blood because he refused to relinquish the prison-van keys.

William Fayle, walking round the drying stacks, heard the shooting and ran to investigate. He arrived in time to see a one-sided fight between the attackers and six policemen (who had been ordered to follow the prison-van in a four-wheeled cab, unarmed). He joined in the rough and tumble. An Irishman named Allin fired a pistol at him; the bullet went through the brickmaker's hat, leaving him unharmed.

Allin took to his heels, and William Fayle set after him across the brickfield. Allin dodged round the drying stacks, from time to time firing at his pursuer. Finally the brickmaker succeeded in running the Fenian down, felled him unconscious with a single blow, and then carried him over his shoulder back to the scene of the am-

buscade, and gave him over to the several police who had foregathered.

(Allin, in company with Larkin and O'Brien, was publicly hanged outside the Manchester New Bailey the following November.)

Later in the morning it came to William Fayle's ears that two of his workmen—new hands, both Irish—had bribed several small boys, earlier, to steal bricks from the stacks and to take them to the gang of ruffians loitering by the railway arch. The boys had received threepence for every brick. In the attack on the prison-van the bricks had been used as missiles.

William Fayle sent for the two Irishmen. They lurched sullenly up to the office, and he was in the act of paying them off when they assaulted him—one with a spade and the other with a pick.

Ernest and his mother arrived in time to see the spade brought down with terrific force on the brickmaker's head.

William Fayle staggered, and fell on his hands and knees. A torrent of blood poured down his face and drenched his clothing. The man with the pick raised his weapon with the evident intention of giving the final *coup-de-grâce,* but before he could do so the wounded giant sprang to his feet and struck him under the ear with a blow that smashed his jaw-bone and laid him unconscious for over an hour. Then, turning to the other man, Ernest's father dodged the sweep of the spade, caught the man by the throat with one hand and his belt with the other, raised him struggling wildly at arm's length above his head, took a run forward and dashed him with a sickening squelch against the brick wall of the office.

The man lay where he had fallen—silent, inert, with a broken collar-bone, and only just alive.

The brickmaker flicked a huge hand across his face, scattering a shower of blood, some of which fell on Ernest's clothing. Workmen came running up from all directions. The master turned on them with a tornado of blasphemy, and ordered them to return to their jobs.

They returned.

Blood still poured down William Fayle's face and dripped from his whiskers.

To Ernest's young mind that incident always presented itself, with fanciful exaggerations, whenever the word "wilderness" was brought up; and the sanguinary adjective that usually went with it added to Ernest's horror of that sinister place.

Mrs. Fayle had already hinted that her son was of finer fabric than the four evangelists—the elder brothers—and that she intended him for something more genteel than a common brickmaker; but Mr. Fayle had always countered by insisting that what was good enough for the father was good enough for the sons; and she had not been able to confute the logic of that argument.

The Fenian incident, however, gave her a leverage; and subsequent threatening letters, from anonymous Irish fanatics, to Mr. Fayle and his sons, lent a purchase of which she was not slow to take advantage. In course of time, by dint of devious hints and subtle assertions, she contrived to make it vaguely understood that Ernest was to be "finished off" at a boarding school. Mr. Fayle was too occupied making money to bother with such a trifle as Ernest's education.

The four evangelists were already earning their keep and their pocket-money in the brickyards. They were all big, healthy fellows, loud voiced, indifferent to other people's opinions, large of limb and hard of head, heavy drinkers and enormous eaters—in short, very much like their father, and almost as handy at knocking men down —and Mr. Fayle was proud of them.

But Mr. Fayle didn't think much of Ernest. In his opinion the boy was fragile-looking, squeamish, and too much attached to his mother's apron strings. He ridiculed the boarding-school project, but did not oppose it altogether.

Mrs. Fayle waited for psychological moments, timed her arrangements nicely, and skillfully contrived to get her own way without causing an eruption.

At the age of twelve Ernest was packed off with a brand new outfit to "a residential college, reserved exclusively for gentlemen's sons, charmingly situated on the coast of Wales. Principal: The Rev. S. T. Bullock, D.D., M.A., F.C.P.," where he remained until he was eighteen.

When he returned home on holidays his school accent

was mocked by his father and brothers. He became what they called "lah-de-dah!" They imitated his modish clichés and his slangy affectations, mincingly and with outrageous exaggerations.

Ernest found it better to remain silent at meals when they were present. His exit from the dining-room was invariably followed by boisterous laughter at his expense.

He saw an unbridgeable gulf between the other male members of the household and himself. Every year the gulf became wider. The unwritten traditional laws of school life bade him avoid the appearance of condescending, but he found it hard. He tried bravely to wield a straight bat—to play the game—to remain unmoved by ridicule. He and his mother became good pals, and he tried not to feel ashamed at the *gaucherie* of her social strivings. His father had once referred to him as looking like a "fish out of order." The phrase tickled him. He introduced it at school as an original witticism. It was taken up with gusto and soon became an important ingredient in the school's stockpot of silly sayings. But whenever he heard it from others, he visualized his father's rough red face with its comic fringe of whiskers, and he called to mind the thick Lancashire accents that had first launched the phrase: and he felt uncomfortable.

At school he was quick to learn, not only what the masters taught but also the distinctive mannerisms of the other boys. He affected a style of smiling aloofness that he had copied from a popular senior. The style suited him. He became engagingly insincere, and generous with his pocket-money.

At home he writhed and longed for deliverance.

Against the bludgeonings of the evangelists his occasional rapier-thrusts of schoolboy sarcasm went unnoticed.

Barriers formed.

Lah-de-dah! Namby-pamby! Milksop! Butter fingers! Silly devil! Fine gentleman! His lordship! (Oh, how Ernest loathed "His lordship!")

The barriers grew mountainous.

Ernest learned to hunt alone.

"His lordship!" Ugh!

III

By the time Ernest was due to leave school his father had launched out into speculative building, in addition to his brickmaking, and had become a very wealthy man.

His four brothers remained at home. None was married. They were known as "that Fayle lot." They enjoyed being pointed out as "reckless devils." Money was no object. Whatever latitude they desired, their father allowed. Whatever good qualities they had inherited—that might have percolated through to them from previous generations of Fayles—were undermined and scattered by a superabundance of pocket-money and an absolute lack of control.

True, William Fayle did occasionally complain that the ever-increasing number of their illegitimate brats he was called upon to support was getting "a bit beyond a joke," and that there was "no telling what those lads'd be up to next." But his complaints were submitted in such a boastful spirit that the general opinion was that he really enjoyed the joke. He allowed that a little bit of fun did nobody any harm. So the jovial four continued to take their fun where they found it—and they found it in many unlikely places—without having to resort to a book of instructions. They went forth, but not too far from the "old man's" money bags, and multiplied; and the "old man" paid for their fun in good English sovereigns.

No vestige of sympathy now remained between Ernest and these others. He suggested Oxford or Cambridge, but his mother wanted him near her, and finally they effected a compromise to which the father reluctantly agreed: Owen's University College, Manchester, from which Ernest emerged with a Bachelor of Arts degree and no earthly idea of what he could do with it.

After leaving college he lived at home and killed time. And for that purpose he had a deadly double-edged weapon—money.

He managed to get through quite as much money as his brothers, but the manner of his extravagance was more graceful. He exercised more judgment and lost less money at betting. His clothes were many and finely cut. His boots were made exactly to fit his neat small feet by

means of a pair of special lasts in the possession of "Manchester's only bootmaker"—Mr. Finlay of King Street—a pair of lasts, so rumor had it, copied from a plaster cast of Ernest's own feet. And—the crowning glory this—Ernest was the sole possessor of the smartest dog-cart turnout in the whole of Manchester.

IV

At twenty-seven Ernest was an accomplished idler, good-looking, debonair; now smilingly indifferent to his father and brothers. Mother and son had roamed Europe together for months at a stretch. They had acquired the habit of "running up to town" together for odd weeks, shopping, theater-going, sight-seeing. In London they stayed at Claridge's, and hired a private brougham for the period of their visit.

Mrs. Fayle was waited on at the hotel by jewelers, dressmakers, and milliners. She liked being addressed in the third person as "Modame."

Ernest had the correct touch in his dealings with the Savile Row tailor—the *only* tailor in London (meaning the world and the remainder of the solar system)—bored and yet humorously interested, leisurely and at the same time smart and crisp, distant in a friendly sort of way, ready to listen to expert advice but not to be talked out of personal fancies. He never hurt the tailor's feelings by asking what things might cost. Savile Row could never recover from such an outrage as that. The jingle of coin is never heard in that hallowed retreat. Payment is something that happens quietly, almost surreptitiously, after many years—never in hard metal—with five per cent. per annum cocked on.

They moved in that world of smooth-running service and soft cushions that appears to have no dependence on money. The world of rich smells—women's perfumes, men's leathers and cigars—not at all spoilt by horse-odor. The world of cheque payments and soothing voices.

Mrs. Fayle acquired a passable veneer, cultivated social amenities, managed to hide her shortcomings by a not unattractive affectation of ignorance, feminine tricks of flattering attentiveness. She laughed pleasingly over

dangerous ground, avoided quickset obstacles and lurking unknowns. She knew the art of making herself appear wise by pretending to be still less wise than she really was —non-committal gestures, shrugs, sudden smiles, a way of looking purposely puzzled, clever pauses, poignant silences.

She took secret pains to preserve her figure and complexion.

Although twenty years older than her son, they were often mistaken for brother and sister.

For both of them Manchester became a dull unprofitable place, and home-life, at times, a very real torture.

One Sunday evening they were alone together in the big drawing-room at Cringle Elms, Mrs. Fayle doing some fancy needlework, Ernest carelessly improvising at the grand piano. Mr. Fayle and the evangelic four were playing pyramids in the billiard-room.

"Look here, mother," said Ernest, suddenly swinging round on the piano stool. "I really must begin to set about doing something seriously. This hanging about's getting on my nerves."

"But, my dear, what can one do on a Sunday—especially in Manchester?" She laughed pleasantly and waved Manchester away into the nether regions with her needlework. "The city's like a forgotten tomb, and the country roads are crowded with those awful four-in-hand charabancs chock full of drunken working-men. I can't think why they don't abolish Sunday altogether. It's a most unpleasant day." She sighed her disapproval of Sunday and resumed her work.

"But I mean doing something generally." Ernest thrust his hands into his trousers pockets and gloomily regarded his boots. "It's all very well to go gadding about, having a good time and all that, but . . . don't you see what I mean, mother? I feel I ought to *do* something—even if it's only . . ." He couldn't think what exactly, and he finished feebly, ". . . even if it's only *something.*"

Mrs. Fayle got up and went across to him. "Listen, dear," she said, putting an arm round him and pressing his face gently to hers. "I want you to be perfectly happy, and I'll agree to anything you like, but," she

waved towards the billiard-room, "don't leave me alone *to them.*" She shuddered involuntarily. "I couldn't stand all this without you, Ernest. You must never leave me—never, never, never!" She kissed him hungrily.

"I don't want to leave you, mother. You know that. But I do want to feel the satisfaction of counting in the world's doings. When I look back at the last three years and see the long trail of dead days, like yellow leaves after an October gale . . . I'm sure I could do something. Surely you can understand, mother. If I were a girl it wouldn't matter . . . and if you were a man you'd understand."

"Oh, I do understand, I do, dear." She did not in the least understand, really. "I quite see what you mean. We must think it over, seriously, and have a good long talk about it. We really must."

She turned over some sheet music on the piano and selected the *Moonlight Sonata.*

"Oh, play me this, dear," she begged wheedlingly. "I love it better than anything else you play." She sat down like a child on the skin rug by his side. "I'll promise not to say a word till you get to the end."

Ernest played the sonata right through, and, for a minute after, neither spoke. She patted his hand.

Ernest broke the silence by saying: "How about an architect? I don't think I should mind being an architect."

Mrs. Fayle took up her needlework again and went back to her chair.

"I don't think I should altogether like that, Ernest," she said. "They're such objectionable men, architects. Father's always having trouble with them: and I'm positive they can't earn much money. Father says he can get on much better without them."

"Oh, I don't know. It's considered a decent sort of profession."

"Still, I wouldn't be an architect if I were you, dear." She paused and bit her lip prettily. Then, as though detecting a nasty smell about the profession in question, she added reprovingly: "Oh, *no,* dear—not an *architect,*" as though architects were thoroughly bad—like burglars.

The subject dropped—it always did—and Ernest continued to do nothing—gracefully and with an air.

V

About this time Ernest met Anne. Like this:

Ernest hated Sundays. But he loved music. To kill time pleasantly he made a Sunday morning habit of visiting a place of worship within walking distance of home.

He made out a list of all the churches and chapels within his orbit, and went steadily through it to find out which had the best organ. In turn he sampled the musical offerings of Roman Catholicism, High and Low Church of England, Wesleyanism, Unitarianism, Congregationalism, Baptist Methodism and the Salvation Army. Roman Catholicism with its insistent pomp stirred him to profound introspections. He caught fleeting glimpses of the dark unfathomed places of his soul which caused him to experience nameless fears and shuddering despairs of immortality. The endless "O God grant this (and that)" of the Baptists bored him, and besides—the pastor had a large loose mouth, moist and repulsive. Ernest didn't like that pastor, neither could he imagine God liking him. But the Salvationists roused him to a terrific pitch of zealous contrition and frenzied hope. He had great difficulty in restraining the impulse to rush up to the bench to be saved. But the atmosphere of the barracks was fetid and heavy with breaths and the reek of unwashed bodies. He reached the outer air and normality still unsalved.

In due course Ernest arrived at St. Stephen's (Church of England), Longsight. On the ledge of the pew was a prayer-book, which he took up in mistake for a hymn-book. Feeling rather foolish, he pretended it *was* a hymn-book, and la-la'd the tune.

Suddenly, from the adjoining pew on the right, a small gloved hand thrust itself before his eyes. In the small gloved hand was a real hymn-book, opened at the right page. Then another small gloved hand came and pointed to the right line.

He didn't know whether he was expected to take the hymn-book entirely or just to join at it and look on. He

took it gingerly at the corner between thumb and finger, and it slipped on to the floor.

He picked it up and looked confusedly into the most wonderful eyes he had ever seen.

VI

Mrs. Fayle never went out on Sundays. It was the only day of leisure for Mr. Fayle and the elder sons, and Mrs. Fayle considered it her duty to remain at hand, to put a check on their drinking. They all drank enormously: Mr. Fayle confining himself mostly to old ale, with perhaps one stiff rum-toddy at bedtime; and the jovial four ready at all times to snap up any kind of liquor that happened to be about. Towards the end of the evening the brothers were never less than "a little bit on," generally very much on; and the father found much joy in drinking them all "blind." Mr. Fayle boasted that no man had ever got the better of him in competitive drinking. Both his thirst and his capacity seemed illimitable. One could safely bet on either, and be sure of getting one's money back.

The games of pyramids invariably finished up with weird contests of physical strength and balancing skill. Trussed up, with billiard cues under their knees, they essayed to pick up sixpences with their teeth. They did strange things with champagne bottles balanced on their heads, crawling round the room after corks. They broke chairs and noses in gripping and wrestling feats, and not infrequently the evenings ended in rough and tumble free fights, with the old man acting as timekeeper, referee, second and chucker-out.

The mother found it impossible to stop these evening orgies, but during the day she could—and did—exercise a restraining influence.

"His lordship" was never wanted, and his absence caused no distress. Ernest rented the pew he had first occupied at St. Stephen's, and every Sunday morning he went in search of salvation and to peep furtively through his fingers at the radiant vision in the pew on the right.

He made discreet inquiries and elicited the verger's confidence. Her name was Anne—Anne Unwin. And

the elderly gentleman with the nice white hair who accompanied her was her father.

"O God, make speed to save us," the priest intoned.

"O Lord, make haste to help us," Ernest responded. And he added mentally: "I wonder if she ever comes alone?"

CHAPTER III

I

ANNE came down to breakfast exactly at a quarter to eight, fresh, radiant, tingling with the joy of living. She was wearing a white silk blouse and a blue serge skirt. But no matter how she dressed Anne was always delectable.

She kissed Mrs. Unwin and said, "Good-morning, mother." Then she kissed her father and pulled his white mustache and said, "Morning, daddy."

Seating herself facing the fire, with Mrs. Unwin on the left and Mr. Unwin on the right of the breakfast table, Anne regarded her distorted reflection in the brightly polished coffee-pot and laughed. Anne's face in laughter was a revelation—something to thank God for. Elusive dimples played in her cheeks. Youth, health, and happiness gleamed.

Mr. Unwin shot a furtive glance at her over the top of his *Manchester Guardian.* Inwardly he seethed with admiration for this wonderful daughter of his. But levity at breakfast was not to be encouraged. Breakfast was a serious affair—a rite.

He rattled the paper and coughed.

Anne was chatting about something that had occurred at school—at the school in Ashton where Anne was a teacher.

Mrs. Unwin signaled with her eyes.

Anne suddenly stopped, caught her father's serious look as he prepared to say grace, and blurted, "Oh!" then, "Sorry, daddy."

Mr. Unwin looked down at his plate and mumbled: "Sanc'fy Lor' these thy gif's our use Cry sake Amen isn't Sam down yet?"

Mrs. Unwin hurriedly enquired "Porridge, father?" and, without waiting for his answer, ladled out a scoopful and passed the plate to Anne, who in turn passed it to her father.

Mr. Unwin helped himself to milk, cream, and sugar without taking his eyes off the *Guardian.*

They ate their porridge. Anne chattered to her mother brightly. Mrs. Unwin spoke occasionally under her breath, and made frequent eye signals to remind Anne that Mr. Unwin was reading, reading the *Manchester Guardian.* Exactly why he read the *Manchester Guardian* over breakfast every morning Mrs. Unwin could not make out. But then, men do incomprehensible things. Mr. Unwin had always read it over breakfast, and until the end of time he would continue to do so. Mrs. Unwin thought it a very dry paper and of no practical use. Her husband would never allow Alice to use old copies for lighting fires. Those old *Guardians* had to be kept. For reference, he said. Each discarded number had to be neatly refolded and added to the stack of similar old numbers in his study. And even when the stacks were very old and dusty and high, even then they must not be destroyed. Every six months or so Alice had to carry them all upstairs to one of the disused attics, and Mr. Unwin would say: "I really must have a thorough good go at that attic. There are lots of things in those papers that I want to cut out and file. Very important things—worth pounds and pounds to me—pounds and pounds."

He never did cut them out. The attic was full of old *Guardians.*

As Mr. Unwin went through breakfast he made up for his lacking share in the conversation by throwing out quotations and comments. From time to time he glanced at the face of the old grandfather-clock in the corner near the window and, whenever he did so, Anne made a grimace at her mother and chuckled quietly.

"Where *is* Sam? That lad's getting worse every day. This ship canal scheme seems to be going strong. I see they're talking of getting Lord Egerton to cut the first sod. It's time they did something, too. There's been a lot of talk. It'll be a grand thing to see a big ocean steamer sailing up to Manchester. Forty miles inland and all uphill."

"How on earth can a ship sail uphill, daddy?"

Mrs. Unwin, a frail little shell-like woman, faded of

face and dressed in black, reproved her daughter gently and served out eggs and bacon.

"Anne, Anne, you mustn't be frivolous, especially at breakfast. Father wouldn't say they went uphill if they didn't, and, besides, it's in the paper."

"But I only want to know how. Is it really true, daddy?"

And Mr. Unwin explained all about locks. To demonstrate the idea he drew lines on the tablecloth with a fork, and placed salt-cellars and pepper-boxes and napkin-rings here and there to represent ships.

"Here's Liverpool—this cream-jug, or no, better still, the toast-rack. See? This butter-dish is Warrington . . ."

"Does it have to go to Warrington?"

"Of course. Why not?"

"Oh—nothing, but Warrington's such a dirty sort of place. Why don't they pick a nice place where there's a view—something worth looking at?"

"Because . . . see." Mr. Unwin rearranged his scheme to make it clear. "There's Manchester—the coffee-pot. That's clear, isn't it? Well, if this is Liverpool . . ."

"But it isn't, daddy. You just said the toast-rack was Liverpool . . ."

"Anne, Anne! Surely father knows best. Go on, father."

"Well, if that's Manchester and this is Liverpool, then Warrington must be . . . where's that butter-dish . . . ?"

"I'm sorry, daddy. I didn't know you were using the butter-dish this time."

Mr. Unwin pushed Liverpool aside and looked once more at the clock.

"I won't have these bad habits. Ring the bell, Anne, please. That lad's becoming a regular lazy-bones."

"He'll be down presently," Mrs. Unwin said soothingly. Then to the asthmatic middle-aged housemaid who answered the bell: "Just tell Mr. Sam that we're all waiting, Alice."

"Yes, mum. But you can't make him hear nohow. I've knocked three times already and he doesn't even answer."

"Tell him he's keeping the whole house waiting," put in the head of the family.

"Yes, sir." Alice wobbled out.

"He's got to stop it. All this gallivanting about at night and lying in bed all day." Mr. Unwin buried himself in the *Guardian* again—like a rather jolly harvest moon ducking into a cloud.

"Hardly all day, father," corrected his wife. "He's never later than nine o'clock at the office, even if he has to miss half his breakfast. But still, I must say these late habits are not nice, not at all nice."

Mrs. Unwin liked everything to be nice. Things that were not nice were horrid. It was nice to receive a present or to go to a concert. It was horrid to be rained on when you hadn't an umbrella, or to be burgled or murdered, or for a lady to be seen in a hansom cab or on top of a bus.

Dr. Beamish—the old doctor at the corner of Hyde Road—was nice; so were the Queen and Mr. Gladstone. Lord Salisbury was horrid—all Tories were horrid. Not that Mrs. Unwin knew much about politics, but her brother—Mr. Whittaker the chemist—and her husband often talked politics in her presence, and she couldn't help but think badly of people who made honest tradesmen pay income tax and ruined the country by owning all the land. Blue was a horrid color, too, at election times.

After the bacon and eggs had been consumed, Mr. Unwin put the *Guardian* aside.

"Let's see, you'll be breaking up this week-end, won't you, Anne?"

"Yes, Friday, for two weeks. There'll be no afternoon school that day, so I can be home for dinner. Good job too. I shall be able to practice a bit for the concert."

"How time flies!" Mrs. Unwin observed. "We shall have Christmas on top of us before we can turn round. I must get those new front curtains up to-morrow. They'll look very nice when they're up."

Mrs. Unwin marked the seasons by the changing of curtains, and the years by "having the carpets done." In time they faded, those carpets, just as she had faded, and in due course they would cease to be. She pondered the solemn thought and sighed. Then, brightening a

little: "This bacon's nicer than the last piece. I told the man at the stores I wouldn't have it unless he gave me a cut out of the back. That last lot was quite horrid —all stringy and full of salt."

Mr. Unwin put in: "I was rather thinking—butter, please, Anne—that we might go to the Hallé concert on Thursday. Sir Charles is going to conduct personally. The Ninth Symphony. You'd like that, mother. And they tell me this new German 'cellist's really excellent: he's doing a solo."

But Mrs. Unwin dissented. "Oh, no, father, not a *German.* Not after what that horrid Mr. Wartman did for you after all your kindness and everything. I don't know how you can ever *think* of such an idea. Really, father, a *German!*"

"Come, come, mother," he protested, "you can't blame a nation for what one thieving mechanic does."

Mrs. Unwin's lips tightened and her nostrils narrowed.

"I don't trust any of them. They're foreigners: you mustn't forget that."

"I'll tell you what," Anne suggested brightly, "let's put it off till after Christmas and go to the pantomime at the Queen's instead."

"Yes, I'd rather like to see the pantomime again this year," Mrs. Unwin agreed. "They're very amusing at times, those knockabouts, very amusing. I really can't help laughing at times."

"Very well, then," said Mr. Unwin, "we'll make it the pantomime. I was only thinking—marmalade, Anne —that the Ninth Symphony would be a treat for you, mother. Perhaps Uncle John and Polly . . ."

The asthmatic Alice suddenly burst into the room and wheezed out between breaths: "I knocked . . . three times, mum . . . hard . . . no answer . . . so I opens the door . . . s'not there at all . . . bed's not been slep' in neither . . . O Lor' them stairs!" She placed a large red hand to her bosom and gasped.

Mr. Unwin looked very severely at his wife.

"There! Been out all night."

Mrs. Unwin said: "Well, that's queer. I can't understand it. Sam's never stayed out all night before. It's very thoughtless of him, very thoughtless."

As though Sam had just forgotten to come home—as though it had just slipped his memory!

Anne rushed in to her absent brother's rescue. "He'll be all right, daddy. Most likely he was playing billiards at the Waddingtons' and they persuaded him to stay."

Mr. Unwin shook out the *Guardian* again and said: "Sam mustn't do that sort of thing. He really ought not. It's . . . it's . . . I'm surprised at him."

Mrs. Unwin addressed the servant. "Thank you, Alice; that will do."

"Thank you, mum." Alice wheezed off.

Anne put her table napkin into its silver ring and jumped to her feet.

"I must be off for my train. Good-morning, mother. Bye-bye, daddy." She kissed her mother twice on the cheeks and her father once on the forehead. "Don't worry about Sam. He'll turn up to-night after business: you'll see." She donned her coat and hat quickly and dashed off to Ardwick Station for the 8.30 train to Ashton.

When husband and wife were left alone Mrs. Unwin slackened slightly and remarked dreamily: "It's wonderful how Anne keeps such good spirits with all her school work and her studies and everything. She'll be overdoing it—sitting locked in that stuffy study every night. It's too much for her."

"Anne? Oh, Anne's all right," Mr. Unwin replied. After an interval, during which he read an interesting paragraph about the recently established telephone service between Paris and Brussels, he added: "And she's looking very pretty, too, our Anne."

"Yes. She's turning out very nice . . . very nice . . . and she's a good girl."

Mr. Unwin glanced sharply across at his wife. "Eh?"

"But I wouldn't like to think she's going to be a school teacher always."

Mr. Unwin refolded his paper carefully and stuck it in a brass paper-rack.

"Well . . . I s'pose I'd better be toddling round."

He embraced his wife tenderly. One would think he was about to embark on a longish voyage.

He was going to his workshop. The workshop could be

seen, beyond the garden wall, through the breakfast-room window: a mere stone's throw—a boy's throw literally. And there was a speaking-tube between the breakfast-room and the workshop.

II

Anne's father was a stockily built, healthy, comfortable-looking man of fifty-seven. He loved order and discipline—in others. He believed himself to be orderly and disciplined. He believed himself to be a man of the world, shrewd, businesslike.

Arthur Wellington Unwin was a dreamer—a bit of an ostrich too. Didn't like official documents or business letters; put things of that sort under a paper weight to be dealt with; later they would be thrust into a drawer with other documents. The drawers in his study were all chock full of things like that. In due course they would be dealt with. Due course! In theory the study was Mr. Unwin's: specially reserved for him to do his thinking in. Everything in it was arranged to encourage thinking—little busts of terrific thinkers were all over the place—Cicero, Plato, Napoleon—all caught thinking deeply; book-shelves all round were filled with thoughtful books. A thoughtful quill pen and a thoughtful inkstand were on a thoughtful writing-table.

It was Mrs. Unwin's habit, when visitors called, to show them the study and say: "This is father's study—where he does all his thinking, you know." And the visitors would take a hurried look at it and say "Ah!" or "Oh!" or "Really!" and back away from it. And afterwards the visitors would picture Mr. Unwin thinking in his study, violently thinking. It seemed a dangerous sort of room; the sort of room that might go off with a bang.

In reality nobody used the study except Anne.

The house was full of rooms that were never used, and each room was full of furniture. Mrs. Unwin and Alice, the servant, and Mrs. Radcliffe—the daily charwoman, spent their whole lives trying to keep up with that house, cleaning, sweeping, dusting.

Mornings at Apsley House, after breakfast and until the mid-day dinner, were times of bustling activity:

women rushing up and down and round about with mops and brushes and step-ladders. Mr. Unwin never stayed long after breakfast.

This particular morning he went out five minutes after Anne had left to catch the 8:30 from Ardwick to Ashton. He wore an old suit and an old cap and he smoked a briar pipe, but the pipe wouldn't stay lit so he put it in his pocket. His pipe never acted as other men's pipes did. It always went out or became moistly vindictive with tobacco juice.

He went out by the front door, down the three stone steps, along the right branch of the semi-circular gravel drive, to the right under the arch-in-the-wall into Apsley Place, to the right again into Luke Place, once more to the right into Higher Ardwick; arriving in two minutes from leaving the house at Back Coldacre, which was on the right of Higher Ardwick.

Over the entrance to Back Coldacre was a painted sign, a big sign:

Carriage ᔕ ELI GARSIDE ᔕ Proprietor
Day and Night.

This was Mr. Unwin's second visit to Back Coldacre that morning. It was his custom to trot round every day before breakfast to let the dog loose. Bruce, a massive, bear-like Newfoundland, was the custodian of Mr. Unwin's shop in Back Coldacre.

Now, as Mr. Unwin entered Back Coldacre, the dog ambled up to him, avid for caresses.

"Go on. Off you go, Bruce. Go and have your feed."

And off went Bruce, following long-established routine, to the back entrance of Apsley House where a plateful of victuals would be given to him by Alice.

III

Back Coldacre was a mews: a bottle-necked *cul-de-sac,* cobbled with "petrified kidneys" and redolent of horses. The bottle-necked entrance was through a sort of short tunnel—flanked on both sides and bridged over by the home, granary, and office of the proprietor, Mr. Eli Garside. At the end of the short tunnel the mews opened out

into an oblong, about sixty yards long by twenty-five yards wide. On both sides of the stableyard were lodgings for carts, carriages and horses, and against the wall at the end was a primitive button-press pump.

Mr. Unwin's workshop was at the far end on the right. To obtain entrance he had to turn a key in three separate locks—one on the top, one at the bottom, and one at the side of a small door let-in the middle of the big main door. From the outside of the small door an iron letter-box protruded. After opening the small door Mr. Unwin unlocked the letter-box from inside and took out his morning mail. The main door itself was heavily reënforced with bosses and strips of iron. On being unfastened from inside the big door slid on ball-bearings along the wall, leaving an aperture of fifteen feet wide by twelve feet high.

The workshop thus revealed was divided into two compartments by a brick partition that ran from the back wall to the middle of the floor. One half of the workshop, facing the doorway, appeared to be a combined joiner's shop and smithy, containing a forge with bellows; an anvil; a carpenter's bench; lathes; scraps of iron, lead and brass; strips of planking and three-ply; a box of coal and coke; all sorts of tools; and an improvised kennel—an old packing-case—for Bruce.

The other half was something of a laboratory-office, containing a long chemist's-bench on which were bottles of chemicals and a Bunsen-burner; a desk in a corner; a high stool; an ordinary chair and an armchair; various kinds of batteries; a sink with water-tap; a calendar on the wall with a text for each day; an oil stove; a glass case on the wall containing retorts, beakers and test-tubes; and in the middle of the floor, which, unlike the smithy half, was boarded and covered with linoleum, there was something about the size of a small donkey covered with a black sheeting—Mr. Unwin's latest invention which he was at present engaged in perfecting.

Within easy reach of the armchair at the desk was a speaking-tube that communicated with the breakfast-room of the Unwin home—a distance of only fifty yards. The speaking-tube had been fitted up at Mrs. Unwin's suggestion. It saved a lot of running around, and it was useful for calling Mr. Unwin to his meals.

Light was obtained from a large skylight and two side windows, one window on the stableyard side and the other on the side that faced the inventor's own house and overlooked his own back garden. Both skylight and windows were of frosted glass and all safely barred with iron.

A loft overhung the back of the workshop to the extent of the partition wall between the two compartments, and in the loft, amongst a heterogeneous collection of lumber, was a large water-cistern that had to be filled by hand.

After glancing through his letters, Mr. Unwin took off his jacket, rolled up his shirt sleeves, donned a leather apron, removed the black sheeting from the object of his present labors, and started fiddling with the nuts and bolts, ratchets and pinions of which the machine was made. But it was evident that his heart was not in his work that morning. After a time he looked up and saw a bare-footed, hatless, ragged urchin of about ten years of age standing in the doorway watching him. The boy looked ill-nourished, mealy-faced, and painfully thin. He was wearing a jacket and pair of trousers much too big for him, obviously the cast-offs of a full-sized man. He stood there silently, rubbing one bare foot over the other for warmth.

"Hello, George Washington," said Mr. Unwin, as he caught sight of the quaint figure. "Not afraid of Bruce any more, eh?"

The urchin smiled. It was a heart-breaking smile—the smile of one to whom kind words are almost unknown.

"Wait a minute," the inventor said, after a thoughtful pause. "I've got an errand for you." He sat down at the desk and scribbled on the back of an old envelope with the stump of a fat, joiner's pencil.

The boy waited in the doorway, gazing questioningly at the improvised dog-kennel as if trying to calculate the tremendous advantages of a dog's life and getting lost in the mazes of the luxurious fancy.

IV

When he had completed the note Mr. Unwin handed it to George Washington with these oral instructions:

"Slip along to Mr. Whittaker—the chemist, you know

—and bring me the parcel he'll give you, and maybe a message as well. Come straight back, and then you can get the cistern filled. Understand?"

The boy nodded and smiled, took the folded note and darted away on his mission.

Mr. Unwin stood looking after the departing little scarecrow and sighed.

A ruddy-faced, pop-eyed individual, wearing very pronounced horsey garments, sauntered down the stableyard chewing the stump of a cigar and greeted the inventor. "Mornin', guv'nor."

"Morning, Eli. Looks like turning out fine, after all."

The pop-eyed individual peered up at the uncertain sky, and then expectorated with the precision of long practice into a sink ten feet distant. "Aye," he said, leaning himself against the high wall at the end of the mews, "mebbe it'll turn out fine; an' then, on t'other 'and, mebbe it won't."

Mr. Eli Garside, the proprietor of the mews, was a man of extreme caution. In his time he had been an insurance collector, tobacconist, lodging-house keeper, traveler in sewing-machines, and "Scotch draper." Whilst in the last-mentioned capacity he had met, courted, and married an ample widow with "a nice bit o' property" (including the mews) and a "tidy bit o' brass in t' savings bank." Caution was Mr. Garside's watchword. Before taking the final plunge into the strange sea of matrimony he had made the most searching investigation of the widow's means, and after the event he had taken upon himself the collecting of her rents and the management of the mews. In spite of a complete ignorance of, and profound contempt for, horses, and firmly rooted suspicion of all persons associated with them—for all the tribe, from a stable-boy to a starting-price bookmaker his generic expression was "horse-copers"—he attired himself theatrically after his own ideas of what a successful mews proprietor should look like: a little, hard, felt hat—squarer than a bowler and rounder than a topper; stuck-up collar and poultice tie fastened with an unusually large horseshoe pin; red waistcoat with gilt buttons; highly exaggerated riding breeches of black and white check with white leather

strappings; shiny brown leggings and boots; and—a daring touch, this, even in Mr. Garside's opinion—a horn-handled hunting-crop to carry in his hand.

In all his life Mr. Garside had never been astride a horse, nor would he venture within ten feet of the kicking end of one under any persuasion.

"How's business, Eli?" asked Mr. Unwin. "Good?"

The proprietor swung himself up on a refuse box against the high wall and surveyed his underlings of the stableyard with contemptuous eyes. "Oh, so so!" he replied. "Just so so. Might be better . . . an' again, on t'other 'and, might be worse. But you gotta keep your eyes on these 'ere' orse copers. Never know what they're up to, that lot—lazy lot o' good-for-nothin' thievin' hidlers, that's what they are, an' I doan't mind tellin' 'em straight." He glared defiantly round the yard and sucked bitterness from his cigar stump.

Mr. Unwin lit the oil-stove and commenced cooking two thick rashers of ham (from out a little store cupboard) in a small frying-pan; and on a stand over the Bunsen-burner he placed a kettleful of water to boil. He then set a cup and saucer and plate and other feeding-tackle on an upturned soap-box in the doorway.

"That for George Washington?" Mr. Garside inquired, as the inventor cut several chunks of bread and put them on the plate.

"Yes, poor little chap, it makes me feel ill to look at him. I don't think he ever gets any real food."

"Um!" Mr. Garside commented. "No wonder 'e's always 'angin' round the place. Dangerous character, that's what I call 'im—'ighly dangerous to the community at large. I doan't 'old with encouragin' that sort about the place." Mr. Garside shook his head disapprovingly at Mr. Unwin's preparations for the urchin's breakfast. "There's enough goin's on in this 'ere mews without hen-couragin' persons of a objectionable character."

"Oh! The lad's honest enough, Eli, and he's getting really helpful now he knows my little ways. But I don't like to pay him altogether in cash. I'm sure his parents take every penny from him immediately he gets home. So long as he gets two or three solid meals here every day I know he won't starve."

"Comes from Ancoats, doesn't 'e?" Mr. Garside inquired.

"God knows where he comes from. I expect it *is* Ancoats."

"Um! Nice lot *they* are. Ancoats!" Mr. Garside spat with careful aim and caused considerable discomfort to a passing beetle.

"The lad's got to live, Eli."

The proprietor eased himself down from his perch. "Nice goin's on," he muttered as he sauntered back to his office at the other end of the yard; "what with Eyetalians on the one 'and an' objectionable characters on the other, an' stror an' 'ay goin' up every day, things are comin' to a pretty pass, I must say. Maybe 'e's honest an' maybe 'e's not, but I got my own superstitions an' I'm goin' to watch hout."

Bruce ambled back after his breakfast, flopped down by the doorway, and promptly fell fast asleep.

V.

When George Washington returned with the parcel and a note from Mr. Whittaker he found a wonderful feast awaiting him—tea, bread and butter, and fried ham.

Exactly who or what George Washington was nobody seemed to know. Somehow he had insinuated himself into Mr. Unwin's service as an occasional help, receiving sixpences and shillings for odd jobs, and a regular five shillings a week for keeping the water cistern well filled. By laboriously carrying about a dozen pailfuls of water up to the loft every day he met the average demand and maintained a maximum reserve.

George Washington was so called by the stablemen because he never told a lie. He was dumb. He couldn't speak, but he could hear, and he was remarkably intelligent, irregularly intelligent. Mr. Unwin read the message that the boy had brought from Mr. Whittaker—the chemist—and went on with his work—filing, planing, polishing and fitting—while George Washington sat on an upturned bucket in the doorway, enjoying his meal and staring at the dreaming Bruce in whimsical specula-

tion as to the adventures he would have if only he had been born a big black dog.

A business-like sparrow hopped about expectantly, vainly searching for an overlooked morsel.

George Washington broke off a generous piece of his bread and held it out encouragingly to the bird. The sparrow snatched at the offering and carried it off to the safety of the roof.

Over one of the stable doors a horse thrust its head and whinnied.

Bruce opened his eyes, blinked twice, and then went to sleep again.

A ray of mild December sunshine filtered through the sullen sky into the drab stableyard and settled like a halo on the towsled head of George Washington.

He smiled. It was a heart-breaking smile. Mr. Unwin caught it and sighed.

But to George Washington life seemed good.

I

CHAPTER IV

ERNEST FAYLE'S dazzling dogcart! Here it is, bowling along Stockport Road, drawn by the magnificent Billie Boy—a proud, high-stepping roan—highly conscious of his own importance in the scheme of things and anxious to catch the eye.

Anne—startled Anne—sits primly by Ernest's side, alert to the devilishness of the whole thing; wondering what on earth her mother would say were it borne to her notice that Anne, Anne, the dutiful daughter—Anne, the demure little churchgoer—Anne, the sedate little school teacher—had been seen in a dogcart owned and driven by "one of that Fayle lot"; sitting next to a Fayle—close . . . with knees under a rug that also covered his; in such intimate nearness that she could detect the scent of the pomade he used for his hair—agreeably mingled with the rich, mannish perfume of good cigars and expensive Russia leather.

Anne doubted if it was quite respectable. She felt self-conscious and awkward. The Anne of now was surely not the same Anne who had been singing soprano a few minutes ago in the quartette to Ernest's pianoforte accompaniment? It seemed she had stepped somehow into a strange dimension.

Five minutes earlier she had never even dreamed of sitting next to Ernest in his dazzling dogcart.

He and she had been kept rather later than usual at the rehearsal by Mr. Scafe—the rector—discussing the final arrangements of the Christmas concert. The others had departed half an hour before the three came out of the classroom into the December night.

Mr. Scafe had said: "I'll see you as far as the tram, Miss Unwin. It's too late for you to be alone."

And, before Anne could say a word, Ernest, fiddling with a horse rug, had chipped in: "Oh, that's all right,

Mr. Scafe, I'm taking Miss Unwin." As though it had all been arranged beforehand.

The next moment the rector had raised his hat and vanished. And here she was embarked on this novel adventure, tingling with a strange excitement, immeasurably happy of her own femininity that could make a man do these things, and flutteringly apprehensive of something she didn't understand and couldn't define. She felt the frosty air biting into her cheeks, and was thankful for the darkness that hid them. She knew they were scarlet. Her heart was suddenly violent.

"How I hate myself for blushing!" thought Anne.

Ernest was apparently unconcerned—light and airy—amusing. Anne couldn't help but admire the mastery he had over Billie Boy.

Inwardly Ernest was saying: "I've done it. This is what I've been playing for—and now I've done it."

It was Anne's first experience of being alone with, and close to, a man who clearly thought well of her as a woman—and showed it. Certainly she had been flattered and complimented by men, often and often; but never in such close intimacy.

Without actually saying it, he let her understand that he considered her solo the best and most important item on the program for the concert.

"You'll have to give an encore, you know, Miss Unwin," he rattled on confidently, as he drew the magnificent Billie Boy down to a less spirited trot. "You had better have one ready. I always think an accompanist looks like a startled rabbit—bobbing about between the platform and the ante-room with pieces of music that are either so old and spineless that they haven't the strength to stand upright, or so new that they get stage fright and roll themselves up: you know what I mean: as though they're trying to make out they've been left over from the paperhangers. You know the sort of thing. Better have your encore ready; then I can fix it to stand up properly before we begin."

Certainly he was rather charming and very jolly, this Mr. Fayle.

"But I might not get an encore," Anne protested. "In fact I hadn't thought about it."

"Oh! you'll get your encore, right enough." He flicked the whip playfully above Billie Boy's ears and laughed lightly, as much as to say: "The very idea of your *not* getting an encore is merely a fanciful jest—let us banish the notion."

"Well, if I *do?*" said Anne doubtfully, "I can sing the same song over again. That's what they usually do, isn't it?"

"No—I wouldn't do that." Ernest was serious. The matter of the encore blotted out the solar system, and even overshadowed the magnificence of Billie Boy. "I'd give 'em a change if I were you—gives you more scope, and makes it more enjoyable for the audience, too. It always strikes me as something of an anti-climax to repeat a song. Don't you think so?"

"Yes," Anne agreed thoughtfully, "I see what you mean. But the only other thing I feel at all confident about is that endless *Meet me by Moonlight Alone,* and that's miles too long for an encore, isn't it?"

Anne began to feel more at ease. "This man's very kind and considerate. I liked the way he talked to Mrs. Bailey and the two elderly Misses Ray. He's thoughtful for women." Anne took a glance at his profile out of the corner of her eye as they passed a street lamp. "And he's really good-looking—not that *that* matters, of course."

"It's not a syllable too long," said Ernest emphatically. "Not the way *you* sing it."

(Anne told herself suddenly: "I think I really like this Mr. Fayle.")

"But I'd like a pop at it together beforehand," Ernest went on. "I'd hate myself for all time if I didn't do you justice. Look here, why not meet there before the others on Friday—say, about half-past six? We can go through everything a few times and get it all pat."

"But I think . . ." Anne hesitated.

"Half-past six isn't too early for you, is it?" Ernest asked as they passed the Polygon fields.

"Well, I was going to suggest . . ."

"All right, say a quarter to seven then. The concert doesn't begin till half-past. We can have at least half an hour before the others arrive."

"It's very kind of you, but . . ."

"Good, that's fixed then." He made a masonic sign, the meaning of which was known only to him and Billie Boy. "Just look at Billie Boy. Isn't he a corker? See how he carries his head. Wonderful, isn't he?"

"He's a darling," said Anne.

"All right, young fellow-my-lad, if you're so anxious to show off—away you go, then." Ernest gave the great roan a bit more rein and away went Billie Boy, full trotting and confident as Destiny.

II

Anne insisted on Ernest's dropping her at the corner of Ardwick Green South and Apsley Avenue. She hurriedly wished him "Good-night," and hastened over the difficult cobbles past the Church of St. Aloysius towards home, wondering whether or not she ought to tell her mother about the adventure.

As she was about to pass under the arch-in-the-wall, that divided Apsley Avenue from Apsley Drive, a man's form suddenly appeared in the circle of yellow light cast by the overhanging gas lamp. Her heart gave a jump.

"It's all right, Anne. It's only me."

She recognized the voice of her Uncle John—John Whittaker, her mother's brother, who kept the chemist shop in Stockport Road.

Anne said: "You startled me, uncle. What's the matter?"

Mr. Whittaker took her arm and led her round the worn-out meadow—a mere croft now—that faced the Unwin home, towards Hyde Road.

"I've been waiting for you about twenty minutes," he told her. "I wanted to catch you before you went in. There's been an awful shindy . . . about Sam."

"What has he done?"

"Something pretty bad . . . apparently."

Anne clutched her uncle's arm.

"Oh, uncle, don't tell me he's gone and got married."

Mr. Whittaker laughed shortly and then spoke seriously.

"Worse than that, I'm afraid. He's done a bunk.

Least, it looks like that. Your dad sent that young scallywag, George Washington, round to me this morning with a note asking me to be sure to call round to-night. Well . . . we were playing chess, as usual, when who should come banging at the front door but old Tommy Waddington, foaming at the mouth and waving his arms about like one o'clock.

"It seems Sam didn't turn up at the warehouse yesterday, nor again to-day. And to-day they had the auditors in for the quarterly balance."

Anne gasped. "Oh . . . and . . . is it?" and she added, with the conviction that women affect when they know they ought not: "But it's impossible. Sam would never do a thing like that. He simply couldn't do it."

But Sam had.

"Seems so idiotic for a paltry thirty-seven pounds," said Mr. Whittaker. "Tommy Waddington and your dad were at it hammer and tongs. Old Tommy was going to call in the police and I don't know what. I was trying to keep your mother quiet. She *would* keep butting in. At last I got Tommy soothed down a bit, but he went off in a rare old stew. Said he'd think it over till to-morrow afternoon at three. Your dad and I are going to call on him at the office. It isn't the money—it's the shame of the thing. He took Sam on in the first place because your dad and I and old Tommy were kids at school together, and he's been jolly decent to Sam all along: allowed him all sorts of privileges; let his own boys have Sam up at their house for billiards and what not.

"What I wanted to ask you, Anne, is this: has Sam been . . . I mean to say, is he . . . Hang it all! Do you think he's mixed up with . . .?"

"No, I do not," Anne declared. "He's a good boy, our Sam, and there must be a mistake somewhere. I think I'd better go in now, uncle."

He escorted her back to Apsley House.

"Well, I thought I'd ask you anyhow," he apologized lamely. "Your dad was for keeping you in the dark. They've both gone to bed. But I figured out you ought to know." He gave Anne's arm an endearing squeeze. "You know, you've got more horse-sense than both of 'em

together. And you were bound to find out sooner or later. But remember: this is in confidence."

"That's all right, uncle. And thank you for treating me like a real woman. I'll run in now. Good-night, Uncle John."

He stooped and kissed her.

"Good-night, my dear. And try not to worry."

III

Reference to the levanting Sam was carefully avoided at the Unwin home next morning.

After breakfast Anne did an unusual thing. Instead of catching the 8.30 from Ardwick, she visited the Ardwick Green Branch of the South-East Lancashire Penny Bank. As the bank did not open until 9.30 she had to stand in the doorway, sheltering from the rain, for nearly an hour until it did.

After a brief interview with the manager she succeeded in persuading him to break a cast-iron rule, and came away with thirty-seven pounds from her deposit account.

Anne's savings were startlingly substantial for a school-teacher earning £35 per annum.

Anne had a secret known only to one other—her cousin, Polly Whittaker—and it was this: Anne was an authoress.

The thing had come about through her winning five pounds in a short story competition some four years previously. She wrote under the name of Gerald Pim, and she received letters containing cheques addressed to G. Pim, Esq., at a little draper-shop in Ashton.

With her thirty-seven pounds Anne made her way to the offices of Thomas Waddington, Sons and Co., manufacturers and merchants, Dickinson Street, Manchester.

A little trap-window announced:

MONTHLY PAYMENTS
LAST FRIDAY
Travelers by Appointment.

An unsociable youth informed her through the trap-window that Mr. Waddington would be in shortly. Anne waited. There was no chair.

A charwoman came into the little compartment, where Anne stood, with a bucket and a scrubbing-brush. Anne went outside and waited in the corridor.

IV

At half-past ten Mr. Waddington bustled in with a dripping umbrella and a carefully folded *Manchester Guardian*. He pushed into his private office and Anne followed.

"Sit down, Anne," he said. "It's very sad—very." He made his face look as gloomy as possible, and started opening letters. A stumpy little man who tried to cheat obesity by wearing tight garments. His face had a way of changing suddenly from pink to purple. He tugged spasmodically at his tight collar and wriggled his neck.

As he laid each letter aside, he muttered: "Very sad—very sad indeed." And when the letters were all gone through he started to tell Anne how he had looked upon her brother as one of his own sons. Anne put in a demure "Yes, Mr. Waddington," every now and then.

Gradually he worked himself up, as if making a political speech, waved his arms about, banged the desk, got up and paced around, sat down again, rearranged the letters on the blotting-pad.

He inveighed bitterly against the unfortunate Sam, and called him a "flaccid gamester" and a "night bird of prey." One tight trouser-leg was rucked up his calf and exposed a red sock-suspender and an expanse of white pant.

Anne began to feel like an accomplice before and after the fact. She bit her lip and gripped hard at the arms of her chair, feeling she would have to rise in her wrath and smite him with his own silver ink-pot or else faint.

In his perambulations round the office he stopped occasionally and peered through the window, as if trying to figure out the time from the reflection of the town hall clock—reversed—in the window of the warehouse opposite. From time to time a furtive head peeped in through a cautiously opened door from the general office, and was withdrawn with astonishing rapidity on catching sight of "the boss all worked up."

After a time he became a little calmer and paused oftener to look out of the window. Tugging at his collar he began to explain why he was forced to take action. "Duty of an employer to maintain the moral principles of business . . . example to others . . . purely as a corrective measure . . ." and so forth—almost apologetic.

He looked sadly at Anne and wagged his head and sighed . . . felt sure it must be a dreadful blow to the young man's family, especially his mother. He had known Anne's father and her Uncle John—Johnny Whittaker—ever since boyhood, "and your mother too—a pretty little girl with ringlets. I remember one day she . . ."

Mr. Waddington lapsed into silence and gazed out of the window for quite a long spell.

He gave a deep sigh and said: "Ah, well!"

Then he turned round slowly and went back to sit in his desk-chair.

Nervously toying with a pen, he said: "Look here, Anne, I don't want to be hard. I've watched you and your brother grow up from babies." He scratched his chin with the penholder. "But even if one of my own sons had done this thing I couldn't let it pass. What can I do? My hands are tied. It's the principle of the thing."

Tremblingly Anne produced her little packet of notes and gold, and pushed it across the desk towards him.

"I've drawn the money out of my own savings at the Penny Bank, Mr. Waddington. Nobody else need know. Couldn't you take it and make up the deficiency in Sam's books?"

Mr. Waddington blew his nose with deliberate care, then drew a bird's nest with four nice round eggs in it on his blotter. He tried to avoid Anne's eyes, which were very serious and appealing—innocent eyes, sincere, wistful—the trustful eyes of youth.

Mr. Waddington coughed and tugged at his collar.

"Well," he mumbled, "you see . . . it's . . . One must . . . ah . . ." He made a circular movement with his podgy little hand and assumed his most imposing, businesslike attitude: leaning back and puffing out his cheeks. "You can't mix business and sentiment. Ah!

. . . hard, I admit . . . at times . . . you see the point, Anne?"

Anne nodded.

"Yes . . . I see. But I have a point, too, Mr. Waddington. I'm thinking of mother. She's not strong . . . and you know how she just dotes on Sam. It'll kill her if she has to believe that Sam's a thief."

Mr. Waddington looked down his nose.

Anne stood up and said: "I'll not press you. We're looking at this from different angles, and," she smiled sweetly at him, "I can't expect a clever business man to be persuaded by a stupid girl like me."

Mr. Waddington rose from his chair.

"I'll tell you what, Anne. Leave it over for the time being. Your father and uncle are coming at three. I'll think it over in the meantime. Can you call to-morrow?"

"I'm afraid not. I've stolen this morning from school as it is. But I could come on Saturday morning."

Mr. Waddington clapped his hands smartly.

"Capital! Capital! Drop in on Saturday about ten."

He let Anne out of his office, through the little waiting compartment, on to the landing.

As Anne went down the stairs he leaned over the banisters looking after her till she disappeared from view.

"It's a cruel shame," he muttered to himself, and he added: "And, by Gad, she's a little corker."

He returned to his private office, tugging hard at his tight collar.

On his desk was the packet containing Anne's thirty-seven pounds. Some one knocked at the door.

Mr. Waddington hastily hid the little packet in a drawer and called out, "Come in."

CHAPTER V

I

WHEN Anne returned home from school that evening she was met in the lobby by the servant, Alice, who whispered that Mrs. Unwin had had "another of them attacks," had "gone all over queer," and Alice had taken it upon herself to call in the doctor.

"He's up there now, Miss Anne; not Dr. Beamish, though. He's ill in bed himself. It's his assistant—only a young fellow." Alice sniffed. "Can't say I think much of him. That's his tall hat and gloves there on the hall-stand."

Anne tiptoed up to her mother's room, which was in the front of the house, overlooking Apsley Meadow.

"Come in," came a man's voice—firm and with the merest suspicion of a Scottish accent—in response to Anne's knock.

The doctor was putting his stethoscope in his breast pocket as she entered the room. He came quickly forward and shook hands.

"Miss Unwin? Delighted. My name's Logan. I know how people are about a strange doctor. Bound to resent it—only natural. Doctor's no use unless he inspires confidence. People don't like changing, *I* know." He smiled whimsically and made a gesture with his hands as much as to say: "I'm sorry, but Fate wills it, and there you are!"

He was an awkward man assuming a briskness to cover his awkwardness. He appeared keen and capable and not at all good-looking. His features were too irregular and his head was of a peculiar shape, high at the crown and covered with stiff unruly hair. Anne noted his over-large mouth. His hand was big and warm, more like a farmer's than a doctor's.

Anne kissed her mother. The little lady looked more faded and weightless than ever amongst the pillows. The

gaslight caused unhealthy shadows to appear on her face and accentuated her natural pallor.

"It's nothing to upset yourself about, my dear," said Mrs. Unwin. "Just a little run down, that's all. I don't think it was quite nice of Alice to go running off for the doctor without my orders. I shall be all right soon, you'll see."

"Of course you'll be all right," said Dr. Logan, buttoning up his frock coat. He turned again to Anne. "Your mother's very self-willed, you know. I can see that. Hates being bossed about. *I* know." He laughed softly. "But even self-willed ladies have to submit when the doctor orders—even a new doctor. And I'm afraid you'll have to put up with the new doctor for some time. Dr. Beamish is very feeble—getting on a bit now. Nearly eighty. Time he began to take it easy. Even he kicks against the pricks. But he's got to rest. And you too, Mrs. Unwin."

As he was saying good-night to Mrs. Unwin, he made a conspiratorial grimace to Anne. She followed him from the room.

Anne showed him into the breakfast-room where there was a bright fire. He said: "Now listen, Miss Unwin. We must watch your mother carefully. No shocks. No worries. No housework. No rushing about—especially up and down stairs. And she must stay in bed till Saturday."

"What *is* it?"

"Machinery wearing out. Can't last for ever, you know." He pointed a large finger at his left breast. "The trouble's here. Heart. No need to distress yourself. Millions the same. Might last twenty years. Has she had a shock recently?"

"Yes. There was some bad news yesterday."

He nodded. "Thought so. Well—if any more bad news comes along, keep it dark. Tell a few lies if necessary. We doctors have to use even *poison* at times, you know. I'll look in to-morrow. Same time. You'll be here? Good!"

Their hands met in trying to open the breakfast-room door at the same time. Apart from the formal shaking hands there is always a peculiar something takes place

when they meet by accident: a sort of registration of quality.

Long after the doctor had gone, Anne felt that casual touch of his warm fingers on her knuckles. The impression she received was of clumsy strength and masterfulness.

II

Anne thought: "Bit dictatorial, that Dr. Logan. Treats women as I should imagine he treats men. Roughish—not at all deferential."

Later she said to her mother: "It's a pity Dr. Beamish couldn't come. That assistant of his is a bit too sure of himself. Don't you think so, mother?"

"I don't know, dear," Mrs. Unwin pondered. "He struck me as being very capable. No shilly-shallying or anything of that sort about him. His hands are nice and warm too. I hate doctors with cold hands. Quite nice, I thought he was."

III

The next evening—Thursday—Anne received a letter just as she was leaving the school—Christ Church School at Ashton.

It was from her brother Sam. She recognized the hand and didn't open it until she was in the train.

"En Voyage to New York,
"On Board the S.S. *Mary Queen of Scots,*
"Monday, December 13, 1886.

"My dear Anne,

"You must think I have done a terrible thing. It *is* a terrible thing, but somehow I feel as though I have nothing to do with it. It's as if I were being pushed. God alone knows where it will end.

"I know I have been foolish, but that cannot be helped now. It's done, and here I am on the way to America. They tell me there are wonderful possibilities there, and I mean to make good.

"I'm sorry for you and mother and dad. Oh! You cannot imagine what it feels like to leave all that love

behind. I shall never forget that half-hour as the boat sailed down the mouth of the Mersey. To die must be something like that.

"I have tried to write to mother. God help me, I cannot do it. Look after her, Anne, my darling sister. And dad too. Be kind to them. But I know you will. It's in you to be good as it's in me to be foolish. You can stick things better than I can. I suppose it's courage I lack. I think that must be it. I have the sudden sort of courage to do wild things impulsively, but I can't grind and stick it like you can.

"Already I've been punished. Rough seas and the smells of the steerage have left me nothing but a reproachful conscience.

"I shall have this letter sent to you from Queenstown, and by the time you get it I shall be somewhere on the western ocean. Try to think kindly of me, Anne. It's too late now for me to turn back. I must look forward to the time when I shall come back a millionaire. You and mother shall have your own carriages and pairs, and dad shall have a magnificent new workshop to play about in, with plenty of paint and oil and grease for him to daub himself with. Dear old dad!

"Kiss them both for me, Anne,

"With love,
"Your affectionate brother,
"Sam.

"P.S.—It's just my luck to sail on the thirteenth. My neighbors—a family of seven, emigrants, poor wretches—are very concerned and predict all sorts of disaster.—S."

IV

After tea she called on Mr. Whittaker, and found him about to extract a small boy's big tooth in the little room behind the shop.

"Pop along upstairs, Anne," said the lean chemist as he concealed a pair of forceps up his sleeve. "Polly's out, but I'll be with you in a jiffy."

Anne popped upstairs. Five minutes later her uncle joined her.

"Well," he started, filling his big briar, "the thing gets mysteriouser and mysteriouser. When your dad and I saw Tommy Waddington yesterday afternoon he told us that the auditors must have made a mistake. He's been through the books very carefully himself and he finds that the money isn't missing at all. What do you think about that?"

"Just as I suspected all along," Anne replied. "Of course dad would be very pleased when he heard it?"

"Pleased? Well—he became a different man—as though a fairy had waved a magic wand over him. Started strutting about like a rather plump turkey cock. Told Tommy Waddington well off too. Tommy looked pretty sick, not being able to talk back. Just sat there and swallowed it all. But I noticed a funny look in his eye every now and then, and I thought he was for jumping up and going for your dad. Started smiling like an amiable imbecile. Funny cuss, old Tommy. Never thought he'd take a gruelling like that."

Mr. Whittaker took a turn round the room puffing hard at his pipe. After a few moments he continued: "The point is now—where's Sam, and why?"

Anne produced her brother's letter.

"This is absolutely confidential, uncle?"

"Of course."

She handed him the letter to read. After going carefully through it twice, Mr. Whittaker again took a walk round the center table and back to the fire.

"I can't fathom it," he said at last. "The only explanation I can hazard is as I thought before—a petticoat."

"The letter arrived at the school just as I was leaving for home," said Anne.

Mr. Whittaker blew a great cloud of smoke at the ceiling. "Seems to me," he said, "that Sam had some reason for not addressing it to the house. He doesn't ask you to keep the letter a secret. And yet the natural thing would have been for him to write to his mother."

"That's just the point. Mother's so dreadfully upset I daren't show her the letter. What ought I to do, uncle?"

Mr. Whittaker smoked hard. "Well, I think it'll be best to tell your dad, Anne. It'll be easier to throw dust

in your mother's eyes if you and he work together. Yes—you'd better do that, lass. Let him have the letter. He's bound to tell me of it; so there'll be three of us conspiring against your mother."

V

Anne called at Mr. Waddington's office the following Saturday morning, and was received by Ronny, the elder of the merchant's sons.

"The guv'nor's awfully sorry about this thing," said Ronny. "He had a regular rummage round himself and found the money in his own desk." Ronny chuckled. "I'm jolly glad it's his fault—take a bit of the starch out of him. Y'know what the guv'nor is? Well, p'raps you don't. Reg'lar old fuss-pot in business. He's not comin' down this morning. Goin' golfin'. Told me you were callin' round. 'Spect he's a bit funky about seein' you, y'know . . . after the fuss he made." Ronny produced Anne's packet, containing the thirty-seven pounds, from a drawer in his father's desk. "He told me to give you this back," he continued, as he pushed the packet across to Anne. "And I say, Anne, it was jolly decent of you. *Jolly* decent."

Anne took the packet with a puzzled air. "Are you *sure* the money's been found, Ronny? *Quite* sure? It's not just one of your father's quixotic little tricks?"

Ronny laughed. "Oh, rather not! You can bet your hat on that. The guv'nor's tight as an oyster about £ s. d."

He rattled on: "When are you coming up to the house again, Anne? Molly thinks of joining the Withington Dramatic Society. You ought to knock her off that idea. Lot of silly asses, I think. They want *me* to join too. Would *you?* I would if *you* would. It wouldn't be too bad a whole bunch of us goin' in together. Such a cliquey lot, they are. Sidey! That's what I call 'em. Still, it wouldn't be bad fun dressin' up . . . wigs and things, and all that. I'm not keen on Shakespeare, though. Are you? All right for school kids. I like comic things—farces, you know. Runnin' in and out of bathrooms, hidin' behind screens an' sittin' on tall hats, an' all that. I wouldn't

mind playin' a comic part myself. But then it would be dashed hard learnin' all the words. Silly ass one must feel breakin' down. Lord! I'll tell Molly to dig you up. You *must* come up oftener."

That sort of thing. But not a word about Sam.

When Anne had gone Ronny took a good look at himself in the little mirror of the office lavatory. His face was pinker than usual. He smoothed his fair hair, readjusted his necktie, made a mental note to jog his sister's memory about Anne, and returned to the private office with the air of bearing tremendous responsibilities.

Saturday morning was always a rush, but that particular Saturday morning, in spite of the weight of the whole firm on his shoulders, Ronny found time for quite a lot of deep thinking.

He decided that he didn't think much of the new friends his sister knocked about with since the family had left Ardwick to live at Withington, and that the combination of dimples and sincere warm gray eyes was extraordinarily perplexing.

And he thought that, of all girls' names, the name Anne was miles and miles ahead of all others.

He tried the sound of it with varied shades of meaning.

Anne. *Anne.* ANNE.

ANNE.

CHAPTER VI

I

DURING the Christmas holidays Ernest made rapid progress with Anne. His first visit to the little drawing-room over the chemist's shop, at Polly Whittaker's invitation, led to his taking the two cousins to theaters, concerts, and dances, and to skating expeditions on the Belle Vue lake.

Polly contrived to leave them alone together for odd half-hours, but always with a loose uncertainty as to when she would burst in on them again.

Anne was a good listener. At times Ernest talked of deep things with capital letters—Life, Religion, Art, Philosophy, Psychology, and Ernest—especially Ernest: the things with capital letters had a way of getting themselves strangely mixed up with Ernest. Generalities gravitated to: "Take me for example," "My experience has always been," "I've often noticed that myself," "For instance, you and I . . ."

At twenty-seven Life (with a capital L) is very much a reflection of Me (with the capital M only disguised as a small one for decency's sake), and if it were not so it wouldn't be worth discussing at all—at twenty-seven.

Anne learned the most distressing and, incidentally, the most interesting details of this young man's inmost secrets.

He was a *sad* man. Nobody would have believed it, perhaps, but his light and airy manner was merely a cunning cloak to hide the "infinite yearnings" of his "real inner self." Nobody could possibly guess how infinite these yearnings were. Ernest told her that himself. She felt deeply sorry for him. Only those who have tried know how hard it is to go about pretending to look merry and bright with those infinite yearnings and things gnawing at one's vitals.

His was a "wasted life." When Ernest sketched out the horrors of a wasted life Anne nearly wept. And the funny thing about a wasted life is that one can be a wasted life without knowing it—that is until one meets the sort of person who somehow makes one realize that one *is* a wasted life. Anne begged him to stop being a wasted life right away. He smiled sadly and shook his head. It seems that once it really gets a hold on you you've to go on wasting . . . unless, of course . . . Ernest made a vague gesture and tried to explain the peculiar need of a certain "steady influence"—"some-one-to-look-up-to."

Wasted lives only react to some-one-to-look-up-to.

Ernest was a man of "great secret ambitions." Those ambitions were kept in check at great personal inconvenience simply because—well, what's the use when one only has oneself to think of? But he knew he could do "big things." In fact he had to exercise the utmost control lest he might do some big things unconsciously—in a moment of temporary forgetfulness as it were.

A sad man who is a wasted life and at the same time harbors great secret ambitions is a terrible thing to contemplate.

II

Polly—plain, homely, nine-and-twenty Polly Whittaker—practical-minded and resigned to spinsterdom, listened to imaginary wedding-bells and longed to make them come true for her wonderful cousin, for her fairy princess, her Anne.

Polly had dedicated her life to her widowed father, and her hopes were long since buried in a certain bottom-drawer where a faded cabinet photograph lay face downwards among soft flimsy things of silk—things that had once meant hope, and were now just memories: the sort of memories to which some folk accord capital letters; the sort that good women turn the key on . . . and then hide the key.

CHAPTER VII

I

OLD William Fayle, brickmaker and builder, was closeted with his broker, in the latter's private office in Pall Mall, Manchester.

"I'm holdin' on, I tell you," Mr. Fayle was saying.

His voice was raised almost to a shout, and he banged Mr. Scholfield's desk with a vehement fist, glaring at the little broker the while, and thrusting his bricky-red face forward as if about to take one bite at that unassuming little gentleman and swallow him whole. "Dost think as I'm goin' to chuck away my brass to let thee scoop up thy miserable eight per cent.? Not me."

Mr. Scholfield placed his hands together—fingertip to fingertip, in the manner of one about to say his prayers—and made a sucking sort of noise with his lips. "I admit," he said after a slight pause, "you've generally been right; and you've often had the satisfaction of forcing me to eat humble pie. But, my dear sir, there cannot be the slightest shadow of doubt this time. We're in for a long bad spell. You can't expect your luck to hold for ever, you know. And this time I'm positive. I've had a lifetime's experience in boom and anti-boom. They follow each other as surely as night follows day. You cannot have an up without a down. Money finds its own level, just like water." He pushed a cigar-box across to his client. "Try one of these—small but good. Match?"

They both lit up; the brickmaker biting the end off his cigar with savage impatience. He hated advice, even from experts.

"My motto," observed Mr. Fayle, "is to buy at the lowest and sell at the highest. Do you think I'm goin' to let go just because a lot o' white-livered fools get cold feet at a bit of a knock-down? No, *sir*," he banged the desk again and added truculently, "not if *I* know it!"

"My dear sir, your motto's perfectly sound," Mr. Scholfield agreed. "The only difficulty is in deciding those extremes." He blew a meditative whiff of smoke towards the ceiling. "Who knows when a stock's at its highest or lowest? I confess I don't, and I've had a lifetime's experience. One can only be guided by circumstances. Let me explain the position as I see it." He leaned forward and ticked off points on his fingers. "Natural causes first. Unprecedented drought in India, China, Egypt, and the East generally. Famine! There's never been anything like it. Look at Russia. In American cotton-growing districts there's the boll-weevil in addition. And in New York two dyspeptic gentlemen, named Brindley and Cargreave, have contrived to send thé price of cotton up to such a figure that Lancashire can't afford to buy. Three-quarters of our mills are closed down. The remainder are running at a loss, and only half- and quarter-time at that. German competition in every branch of trade is undermining the prestige of England all over the world. Dyes, machinery, fabrics and textiles—they're stealing everything from us; underselling in every line. Overseas trade is the very life's blood of this country. Take that, and where are we? Look at the banks. Three gone biff in the last two weeks. One London and two provincial. The others are covering as best they can. Credit's bust, my dear sir. People are chucking their scrip into the market in cartloads. *We're giving it way,* I tell you. People are tumbling over each other for ready money. And it's getting worse every minute. Believe *me.* There's not the slightest chance of recovery until old Mother Earth comes to our rescue next harvest. We can't do without her. Every so often in the recurring cycles men forget that it's on Mother Earth's bounty they depend—they think they're clever enough to get along without the old lady—and this is always the result. Enterprise must be limited by the bearing capacity of the soil we tread."

Mr. Scholfield sighed and then went on:

"On every hand strikes and lockouts. These trade union agitators are playing into the hands of the employers, and the wretched working man can't see wood for trees. My dear sir, there's going to be hell to pay. Bad as it is I say *get out while you've got the chance,* because it's

going to be a thousand times worse." As he finished speaking the stockbroker closed the lid of the cigar-box, with a flick of his finger, and placed a paper-weight on top of it.

Mr. Fayle reached across for his high hat and stood up.

The little man also stood up and laughed. He had not expected his client to agree so readily. "Well, I'm very glad to see you're going to take my counsel at last," he said, offering his hand. "I'll clear out your holdings—all the speculative stuff, I mean—immediately, at the best possible. We'll play safe and stick to gilt-edge—what?"

Mr. Fayle pointed an enormous forefinger at the stockbroker's head. "Listen," he commanded, "I don't give a tinker's cuss for all your high falutin' talk. I've made my brass in my own way an' I'm goin' to stick to it. This is what I think of your advice. Buy up another twenty-five thousand pounds' worth at 'market' to-day. Spread it out pretty evenly amongst the stocks I've already got. You've got the scrips in your safe, or, maybe, at your bank. That's security for you; an' I'll cover in cash on settlin' day—even if I have to get a bill o' sale on Cringle Elms—see!"

Mr. Scholfield became frigidly polite. Without a word he scribbled some particulars on a slip of paper and pushed it across the desk for the big man's signature.

After signing the instructions Mr. Fayle jammed on his high hat and banged out of the office.

II

Tea was just over at the Whittaker home: Polly collecting table utensils and carrying them off to the kitchen sink; her father leisurely filling his pipe, in preparation for a restful half-hour in the big armchair by the fire with the *Manchester Evening News*.

"Just look at the time," said Polly. "I've got to rush it if I'm to be ready."

"Going out?"

"Yes."

"Where?"

"Royal panto."

"Anne going too?"

"Of course."

"Anybody else?"

"Yes, Mr. Inquisitive, if you want to know, somebody else *is* coming."

"Ah!"

"Ernest's got a box. I've to wear my evening frock."

"Playing gooseberry, eh?"

"Perhaps I am and perhaps I'm not," Polly returned, picking up a large trayful of crockery. "You going round to play chess with uncle?"

"Yes, soon's I've got through the prescriptions." He raised his voice to carry through to the kitchen. "Don't forget to take your key . . . case I'm late."

Vigorous washing-up noises came from the kitchen.

Mr. Whittaker opened his paper and commenced his nightly browse amongst the political intelligence, beginning with the editorial. In due course he arrived at the news page. The headlines leapt to his eyes:

ATLANTIC PASSENGER STEAMER WRECKED,

RESCUED SEAMAN'S TERRIBLE STORY.

ONLY SIX SURVIVORS.

Glancing quickly down the columns he caught the name: The *Mary Queen of Scots.*

Then he read the story from beginning to end.

The vessel had been in trouble most of the voyage with engine complications. On the eighth day out from Liverpool the captain was trying to make up for lost time. The packet was making good way under full steam, with a heavy following sea, and helped along by a gale of wind. The night was pitch black. All the ship's lights full on. Suddenly a terrific crash. A sickening shock that drove in the vessel's bows. Hopeless confusion. Passengers rushing up from their cabins in dressing-gowns and night attire. Panic. Boats carelessly slung down from the davits; men and women fighting to get in them. Overcrowding, then—capsizing. Darkness all around. Mountainous seas glimpsed in the yellow light from the ship's

lamps. Noise. Wind shrieking through the cordage. Men, women and children yelling, screaming, crying—praying. Unutterable horrors.

"The opinion of the seaman, Williams, the sole survivor of the ship's crew, is that the *Mary Queen of Scots* must have struck an almost completely submerged derelict timber-barque. He himself noticed what might have been the broken mainmast of such a vessel. A water-logged hulk, full of timber, struck amidships by the bows of an oncoming vessel under full steam would certainly be as destructive as a rock of equal size—especially when . . ."

The other survivors were Henry Marlowe (63), Shipping Agent of Liverpool; a little Italian girl, Rosa Maria Veladini (8), Mrs. Heath and child of Leeds, and Harriet Mackinley of Dublin.

The little boat under seaman Williams's direction had weathered the gale by a miracle, and had been picked up at noon the following day by the s.s. *Niobe* bound for Boston (Mass.).

"It is feared that the remainder of the passengers and crew are drowned. . . ."

III

Later that evening, as he was entering the gate of Apsley House, Mr. Whittaker met his brother-in-law coming out—hatless and in a great hurry.

"What's up, Arthur?"

"It's Mary. Another attack. I'm off for the doctor. Alice is with her."

"Look here, you go back, Arthur. I'll run round to the doctor's."

"Thanks, John. Tell him to look slippy."

The lanky John sprinted away through the little arch-in-the-wall into the darkness of Apsley Place beyond.

When Anne returned home, shortly after eleven, her father and uncle were in the breakfast-room—strangely silent and not playing chess.

She looked from one to the other inquiringly.

"What's the matter, you two? Something's wrong, I can see that. Is it mother?"

"Perhaps you'd better go up, Anne," said Mr. Unwin.

"Dr. Logan's been there for three hours with Alice to help him. He chucked us out. Says we hinder him."

IV

Long after the doctor had gone the two brothers-in-law sat talking—mostly about Sam; debating the possible reasons for his having left home, and the slender chance that he might still be living.

Suddenly Mr. Whittaker put a warning finger to his lips, tiptoed to the door and opened it quickly. In the lobby, just by the breakfast-room door, was a middle-aged woman with a bonnet on her head and a shawl over her shoulders. She looked startled; uneasy. Obviously she had been eavesdropping.

"I didn't like to disturb you gentlemen," she hastened to explain, "but I'd like to know if I may go, sir?"

Mr. Unwin came forward. "Oh! It's Mrs. Radcliffe. Yes, yes. We'll be able to get along now."

"Shall I come in the morning, sir?"

He seemed hardly conscious of the woman or of what he was saying. His voice had the tired tones of one who carries great sorrow. "Yes, come in the morning."

"Thank you, sir." The woman let herself out.

"Who *is* that?" asked Mr. Whittaker.

"She's the charwoman—used to come only in the mornings, but since mother's been unwell she's been coming full time, to help Alice. I'd forgotten she was still here."

Mr. Whittaker probed the bowl of his pipe with a penknife. "I knew somebody was at the door," he said. "We were talking of . . . of the wreck, you know. Thought at first it might be Anne. But, of course, *she* wouldn't listen at a key-hole." After relighting his pipe he added: "I suppose she's all right, that charwoman?"

Mr. Unwin didn't hear. He sat staring into the red-hot coals in the grate.

V

A full account of the wreck duly appeared in the *Manchester Guardian*. Amongst the missing—believed to be drowned—was the name: Unwin, S.

Mr. Unwin and Anne contrived to keep all newspapers away from Mrs. Unwin, and the frail little woman remained in ignorance of her son's fate.

She rarely spoke of Sam, but she insisted that his bed should be kept well aired and his room nice and tidy.

"I wouldn't like him to think we didn't expect him," she told Anne. "He'll be tired, too, I expect, when he *does* come home. You might run up, dear, and see that Alice has arranged everything properly. And see that his cricket bat's propped up in the corner near where he keeps his books. As soon as I feel well enough I must have a good go through his drawers myself. The moths get at everything unless you keep the drawers well cleaned, and Alice *will* skimp corners unless I'm constantly at her. If you're going across to Uncle John's you had better bring some more of those camphor squares back. They're very good for the moths, those camphor squares. He might be home any day now. He's so erratic, Sam. I do wish he wouldn't do things like this. People might think all sorts of things, and besides it isn't nice."

Mr. Unwin took Dr. Logan into his confidence about Sam, and the doctor agreed that it would be disastrous for his patient to learn the truth.

Visitors were allowed to see the faded little lady only after being carefully pumped as to their knowledge or ignorance of Sam's having been a passenger in the ill-fated *Mary Queen of Scots*. Mr. Unwin and Anne were astonished that none of their friends appeared to have noticed the name in the published lists. Within a week the wreck was forgotten, except by those immediately concerned. Even to them time brought its sweet solace.

When Ronny Waddington and his sister Molly called at Apsley House one evening, ostensibly to lure Anne into the giddy vortex of Withington's social gayeties, Mr. Unwin willingly lent his weight on their side, and, to please her father rather than herself, Anne allowed herself to be lured.

"You mustn't lose touch with old friends, Anne," said Mr. Unwin, "and it'll do you good to take a run up to Withington one or two evenings a week."

"She spends too much time studying," he told Molly

and Ronny. "Night after night she locks herself in the study. It's too much."

He took Anne by the chin and looked critically at her face.

"You'll lose all your sparkle and rosy cheeks, you know. And you ought to mix with people your own age more."

Molly took Anne's hand and pleaded.

"Do come up on Saturday, Anne. Early—about half-past two. Ronny's playing lacrosse for Withington. We'll watch the match and go back home for tea, and in the evening we're having a little bit of a party—Ronny's friends and mine. No dressing—just as we are."

And Ronny, pink and eager, added:

"Dancin' and all that. Awfully decent fellows—awfully decent . . . and some ripping girls . . ." Ronny stopped suddenly and became very red.

Anne went to the party, and after that party others followed. She dropped her story-writing for a time. The roses came back to her cheeks, the dimples began to play again, and the sparkle returned to her eyes.

Sam wasn't forgotten, but the grief of his loss ceased to obsess to the exclusion of all else; became, as it were, parcelled up and properly placed among the shelves of memory. Anne regained perspective.

Ronny Waddington was very attentive, highly nervous and madly enthusiastic about games when with Anne. She thought he hadn't changed at all. They had played together as children, and they continued to play, apparently on the same old footing.

When alone Ronny was a man, full of strong determinations. But the moment Anne looked at him half the years of his life slipped away, and he was once more the boy Ronny. The old sister-and-brother sort of relationship reasserted itself in their meetings. Anne liked it. Ronny worried, wondered, and wrestled with himself.

"Funny things, girls!"

Thus Ronny bumped up against the eternal and unfathomable mystery—toying with a name: "Anne, *Anne,* Anne."

ANNE!

CHAPTER VIII

I

AFTER a fortnight in bed Mrs. Unwin began to recover, but for many weeks she never left her room. The faded little lady had the greatest faith in old Dr. Beamish's new assistant, Dr. Logan, and carried out his orders implicitly.

Mr. Unwin also took a great liking to the young medico who, he discovered, was keenly interested in mechanics and hydro-dynamics. They found endless joy in working up problems for each other. These flighty contests finally settled down into one big puzzle that necessitated many diagrams on backs of envelopes and odd scraps of paper; it developed into a proper drawing to scale, to a cardboard model, then to a complicated thing of metal, finally a perfected device for removing moisture from textiles—to be patented in the end as the Logan-Unwin Hydro-Extractor and sold to a well-known firm of cotton-mill machine makers at Oldham.

It was the quickest success Mr. Unwin had ever experienced. He himself did all the practical work. Never before had he been so completely carried away by enthusiasm. Parts fashioned themselves and fitted themselves together of their own volition, it seemed to him—never a hitch, never a flaw.

He experienced that unaccountable inrush of power, that magic previsioning, in alliance with superabundant energy, that comes at rare intervals to the aid of those who have habitually and whole-heartedly devoted themselves to the worthy creative task; the power that exalts, that quickens the faculties to the consummation of the masterpiece; that increases working capacity to the superhuman; the inspirational genius that divines rather than invents, the triumph of the spirit and the will.

Until now the inventor's successes had been sporadic. Monetary return affected him but little. He had an ex-

traordinary faith that the laborer would be paid his hire. There had been lucrative years and lean years. Between them he had managed to keep going. After a profitable harvest he would apply himself to some big undertaking that might take a year or two years to complete. When funds ran low he took to pot-boilers. Not infrequently the things he cared for least brought in better financial results than the more ambitious creations of his choice. A calendering machine that occupied him for two whole years brought a paltry £100 to the Unwin treasury. A novel rat-trap, finished in one day, netted £250 down and a royalty that amounted to about £200 per annum.

During the last few years financial results had been better than ever before. The name of Unwin was becoming known throughout the engineering world. Machine-making firms inclined themselves politely towards him. A law-suit, forced upon him through the machinations of a certain Adolf Wartman—a German mechanic whom he had engaged as an assistant and who had subsequently been sentenced to two years' imprisonment for forgery and theft—had given him considerable unsought publicity. The name of Unwin was becoming a valuable property.

The Logan-Unwin Hydro-Extractor started as a joke and ultimately became a boon to the cotton industry. It was the result of the fusion of two minds. Mr. Unwin insisted on the doctor's sharing in the profits. The doctor was equally insistent in disclaiming the inventor's indebtedness. Finally, under the Whittaker arbitration, it was agreed to divide the plunder into three-quarters for Mr. Unwin—in view of his furnishing materials and doing the practical work—and one-quarter for Dr. Logan.

Collaterally with the construction of the hydro-extractor the drumbox loom—a device for multiple color weaving—which had defied Mr. Unwin's cunning for nearly twelve months, began to re-form itself in the inventor's mind, and, after ruthless scrapping and remodeling, into actual metal fact. Concentration on one machine aroused a complementary recreative interest in the other. The two grew side by side in the Back Coldacre workshop. Mr. Unwin worked long hours without consciousness of fatigue. In toil he found the blessed anodyne that brought

forgetfulness of his son's unaccountable, apparently callous, defection, and of the swift tragedy of the wreck. The relentless pursuit of perfection absorbed his every moment and built up a barrier of inhibition over which he trained himself not to peep.

The doctor took the habit of slipping into the workshop whenever he could spare a few seconds; flying visits—just to see how *it* was progressing.

An affectionate mutual regard grew into being between the two men. They respected and admired each other's capacity for endurance.

"That young fellow's a mighty slogger," the inventor told his daughter. "Called out of bed two or three times every night, and at it all day long; every day, Sundays included."

Anne began to think better of the clumsy, large-limbed doctor, albeit in a belligerent sort of way—reluctantly. She still felt annoyed at his way of looking at her, and at his rough-shod methods generally. His intellectual activity was obviously enormous. A mathematical impasse would set him aglow with passionless flame—as would also a medical "case." Human beings *as* human beings left him as disinterested as the tiniest twinkler of the Milky Way.

"I'd like to tie him to an operating table and cut him open with his own surgeon's-knives," Anne told herself, "just to see what sort of mechanism there is where his heart ought to be. I shouldn't be surprised to find cog-wheels and a gearbox."

Yet, in some strange way, respect developed. She found herself contrasting the doctor with Ernest Fayle. She thought better of Dr. Logan when he was not present. On the contrary Ernest fascinated her beyond reason when she was actually in his company; but when she visualized him coolly, away from the spell of his personality, she was unwillingly impelled to adverse criticism. His contentment in ease—to stroll through life peacefully smoking an expensive cigar—belittled him and shocked her.

II

Polly Whittaker, homely-featured and approaching thirty, had few illusions. She looked after her father—a widower—and resigned herself to her lot. But she had great ideas for Anne. Artfully, without letting her hand be seen, she did her best to bring about a match between Anne and Ernest.

Ernest had money and he was good-looking. And in every way he seemed perfect.

"But he doesn't *do* anything," Anne complained to Polly. "I like Ernest immensely, but I do wish he would grab hold of life and do something *with* it. It's such a pity, because I'm sure he could do something if he really had to. It's all very well to dash about in that dazzling dog-cart, but I'd like to see him doing his share in the world's work. He wants shaking."

Polly made a secret promise to shake Ernest.

And she did.

III

Ernest found himself taking an intelligent interest in a portion of the *Manchester Guardian* hitherto neglected by him—the financial columns and the pages devoted to markets and cotton.

Business? Well, why not? It seemed quite a jolly sort of game, but complicated. It seemed frightfully complicated. But still . . .

IV

One treacherously sunny morning in January Ernest Fayle leapt from his bed fired with a mighty resolve.

"Bath ready, Royle?"

"Yes, sir."

"Good! To-day, Royle, a new era begins. The god of day is high above the mountain tops. My mind is made up. My bath is ready. Everything augurs well."

"Yes, sir."

"From now on, Royle, we put away childish things."

"Very good, sir."

"We apply ourselves to the grim struggle for existence. We think only in millions. Our hands, calloused with toil, shall show us terrible things. Terrible, stern reality can look us in the face, Royle, and we shall swerve not from our purpose; neither shall we flinch."

"No, sir."

Ernest finished his early tea and slipped on a fantastic silk dressing-gown.

"We must never flinch, Royle. Flinching is the way of the weakling, Royle. Never flinch. Is the water nice and warm, Royle?"

"Hundred and ten, sir."

"Ah! We must not pamper ourselves, Royle. Pampering loosens the will and undermines the manhood. Never pamp! We must conserve our manhood, Royle."

"Yes, sir."

"We must harden ourselves. We must do uncomfortable things. Reduce the bath to a hundred and five, Royle, and let us begin the day well. From this minute, Royle, we are Spartans."

"Exactly, sir."

Royle proceeded to carry out his orders. Royle always proceeded. He never just went. He fulfilled his duties. He didn't just do his job. Nominally Royle was second footman in the Fayle establishment. In reality he did little besides valeting Ernest.

Humming a lilty air Ernest followed his man to the bath-room.

Royle tested the water with a thermometer.

"Hundred and five exactly, sir."

"Excellent." Ernest disrobed and slid into the luxurious porcelain.

"Which suit, sir?"

Ernest toyed with a loofah. "Ah! A nice point, Royle. We must debate this thing with care. The circumstance is this: to-day I make my first entrance in the world of finance. The world of finance must not be let down. I'm a partner, Royle. I don't know if it conveys anything to you, but I'm a head of a firm. A two-headed firm it is —like What's-his-name, the fellow who had two heads. You know what I mean?"

"Exactly, sir."

"Very well. That's what I mean. I'm a partner. Sort of boss. I've got to *look* like a boss."

"Might I suggest a morning coat and silk hat, sir?"

"Hm. You don't think that's too heavy, Royle?"

"Well, sir, that depends on the nature of the business."

"I see your point. Well . . . it's very important. I have to go on 'Change, anyhow, if that can help you."

"'Change, sir? Then a silk hat, by all means, and a morning coat or frock."

"That's settled then. Morning coat. Patent shoes. Pearl gray gaiters. Nice black tie with little flecks of white, and a pearl pin."

"You'll drive down, of course, sir?"

"Yes. Tell Saunders: nine o'clock sharp. And before you go, just give my back a bit of a slosh with the loofah. Don't be afraid to lay on a bit. That's better. Breakfast in twenty minutes."

"Very good, sir." Royle sloshed and went.

V

As Ernest was making his second attack on the bacon and kidneys, in the chafing dish on the sideboard, his mother came into the breakfast-room, loosely clad in a morning boudoir-gown. She held an opened letter in her hands. Ernest kissed her on the cheek.

"What do you think, Ernest?" she said, as she busied herself with the silver teapot. "Isn't this splendid? Mrs. Merrick and Ella are leaving Nice for Paris. They want us to join them for a week there, and perhaps a week or ten days in Switzerland before they come home. Can you be ready by Thursday?"

Ernest stooped to pick up his table-napkin which had slipped under the table. Under cover he breathed an inaudible "Oh, damn!"

"It's . . . er . . . I mean, it's rather awkward, mother," he replied uneasily. "Fact is, I've . . . one or two engagements. Fellows I've promised to meet . . . and so forth."

"Oh, that's easily arranged. You can send some telegrams." Mrs. Fayle referred to the letter again and quoted: "'We're so looking forward to seeing Ernest

again. You might tell him Ella's very anxious for him to see her latest pictures. I'm sure he'll be astonished at her progress. She has been taking lessons from an awfully clever artist here, an Italian, but quite clean; as a matter of fact he's a sort of nobleman—very rich. He has a studio in Montparnasse, and he talks of introducing us to some real geniuses in the Quartier. We shall arrive Wednesday and, of course, we shall stay at the Bristol.'"

Mrs. Fayle put the letter down beside her plate and took a sip at her tea.

"Pity I'm so tied up here," said Ernest, passing his cup across for more coffee.

"But you *must* come, dear. This place is getting on my nerves. Ugh!" She made a pantomime shiver. "This is the first decent day we've had for months. And Paris'll be delightful. I *do* so want to see the Latin quarter, after what Mrs. Merrick has told me about it. All those wonderful artists and people with funny trousers and long hair and things. So perfectly careless they are—Bohemian. The change'll do you good, too. You haven't been yourself at all lately: and you've been neglecting me abominably. I don't mind waiting till Friday, if that'll suit you."

Ernest rose thoughtfully and went to stand by the window. Birds were twittering in the trees and squabbling over worms on the croquet lawn. A hint of spring was in the air and in his blood. He thought of Anne and of her uncompromising indictment of all idlers. There must be no side-tracking. Had he not made a mighty resolve?

"I'm awfully sorry, mother," he said with unusual firmness, "but it's absolutely impossible. I must stay in Manchester."

"But, my dear boy," she spoke soothingly, caressingly, confident of her sway, "you can't possibly stay here without me. *They'd* never give you a minute's peace. You know what *they* are. You couldn't put up with them alone. Are those kidneys really well cooked? Well, just one, dear. And a tiny little bit of bacon. Thank you, dear. You really must come."

He passed the toast rack to his mother and then stood with his back to the fire.

"Listen, mother," he said, "I'd better be frank. I've started in business."

Mrs. Fayle dropped her knife and fork and ejaculated: "Ernest!"

"It's true. I signed the articles of partnership yesterday. I start at the office this morning."

Mrs. Fayle couldn't have looked more taken aback if he had told her he was about to be cremated.

"Business? *Ernest!* How can you say such a thing? It's scandalous! *Business?* I can't believe it."

"It's perfectly easy to grasp. I have bought a junior partnership in an established concern. A Manchester goods agency sort of thing. We buy and sell. It's very simple."

"Ernest, it's terrible. Terrible! You can't think how you hurt me." She pushed her plate away and made her face very sad.

"It isn't terrible, really. The place smells a bit like castor oil, and it's a bit dusty, but I think it'll be awful fun—going on 'Change and all that."

"But it must have cost a lot of money."

"Tidy bit. But I'll get it all back within a few months. It's a going concern—that's the point. Ledgers, name on door, telegraphic address . . . so forth. There's a fortune in it."

"Do you mean to tell me you have spoken to father behind my back?" Angry now. Eyes flashing. The remote Latin strain flooding back through the centuries.

"Don't get so excited, mother. No. I haven't mentioned it to anybody. Done it all off my own bat."

"Where's the money from, then?"

"My bank. I paid five hundred down. I have to fork out another five hundred at midsummer quarter-day, and then two hundred and fifty each quarter till I've paid the full purchase price. If necessary, I could do it easily out of my own allowance. But there's no need to worry about that. Shankland—he's the chap I'm going in with—smart fellow—keen as mustard—faith, hope, and fifty-per-cent. sort of Johnny—he told me that if I didn't pick up a cool thousand profit in six months, on top of my salary, he'd eat his hat. And . . ." he looked at his thin

gold watch. "By Jove! I'd better be making tracks. Promised to be at the office by half-past nine." He kissed his mother lightly.

"Oh, Ernest!"

"Now, don't worry." He made for the door. "You pop along to Paris and have a good time. Don't worry about the little bread-winner going to his daily toil. I shall be keeping the old flag flying on the Manchester Royal Exchange. Bye-bye."

Two minutes later Ernest was bowling along over the crunching gravel of the long avenue towards the lodge gates, top-hatted, wrapped in a warm overcoat, the reins between his gloved fingers; Saunders in full livery by his side in the dog-cart, and in front Billie Boy—full trotting and still confident as Destiny.

Bright was the sunshine and clear the sky, but the cold east wind carried a warning note.

Ernest Fayle—business man!

VI

Ernest discovered business to be an extremely jolly game, and he plunged into it with great zest.

The offices and warehouse of the going concern were situated in Cannon Street. Frederick Shankland and Company, Jobbers and Merchants, Turner's Building, Cannon Street, Manchester. Telegraphic address: Yarnland, Manchester.

The title of the firm was to be altered to "Shankland and Fayle" at the end of the year. "Just to give you time to get the hang of the thing," Mr. Shankland had said. He might have said: "Just to give you time to pay the last installment of the premium!" But Mr. Shankland was not without tact.

It had all been arranged with astonishing ease.

Anne's refusal—she had said, "No, Ernest, let's remain as we are; friends, good friends"—had driven Ernest, after a few days of suicidal gloom, in which he had failed to hit on a death suitable to the occasion, to a more spirited scrutiny of the *Manchester Guardian's* advertisement columns. "£1,500 will purchase half-interest in highly lucrative going concern. Present sole owner un-

able to cope with the increasing business single-handed. Immediate half-share of profits and regular salary to active investor with capacity for organizing. Box B 83," had intrigued Ernest's fancy.

A tentative letter to Box B 83 had brought about an interview with Mr. Shankland, a quick-moving little man with a beard and a shiny blue suit. Mr. Shankland had shown Ernest over the going concern and had become expansive afterwards over a champagne lunch at the Queen's Hotel.

"You're just the man I'm looking for," Mr. Shankland had said, "but I'm afraid you're too late. There's been a terrific rush. And, as a matter of fact, I've half-promised. . . . A very well-known Manchester man. It's Mr. . . . well, perhaps I'd better not mention names. One has to respect a business confidence. You see the point?"

Ernest understood—quite. Delicate position—so forth.

"It's damned annoying." Mr. Shankland looked hard at Ernest and took a deep pull at his two-and-sixpenny cigar. "This other chap hasn't half your . . . what shall I say? . . . nous. That's the word—nous."

Ernest half closed his eyes and nodded. Shrewd sort of Johnny, this Shankland. Keeps his eyes open.

After making several rings of cigar smoke, as though intent on big problems, Mr. Shankland suddenly thumped the table and ejaculated: "By Jiminy! I've got it. I'll keep him to his word. Damned if I won't." He leaned over and took Ernest confidentially by the arm. "Look here, can you be at my solicitor's at . . ." he consulted his watch, "say, at four?"

"Well . . . I could," said Ernest. "Why?"

"Well, I'll tell you. Absolutely *sub rosa,* mind. Strictly between ourselves. I wouldn't do it for anybody else, but I *like* you. You're just the man I want. I'm not going to break my promise. Oh no, on the contrary I'm going to keep it . . . to the very letter." "Shankland sank his voice to a whisper and drew his chair round the table, quite close to Ernest's. "This is the point. I want you to bear me out that I'm acting fairly."

Ernest put an assuring hand on Mr. Shankland's

shoulder and said: "My dear sir," quite knowingly, as becomes the big business man—the man of nous.

Mr. Shankland waved his cigar, to signify his appreciation of Ernest's mental jump, and went on: "He promised to meet me to-day at four sharp at my solicitor's in King Street, to sign the articles. This is my proposition. We'll put him to the test."

Ernest took pleasurable note of the glissade into plurality. This Shankland treated him like a partner already. Jolly fine lunch he'd stood, anyway. Cliquot—perfect. Corona-corona—superb. A fellow of discriminating taste after Ernest's own heart. Ernest assumed his most business-like expression. He bit his underlip and screwed up his eyes, nodding his head as Mr. Shankland was speaking, to let him know that his meaning had been absorbed long before the sentences finished. You've got to use your brains in business—no mistake about that.

"We'll take him at his word," said Mr. Shankland.

The two looked at each other and exuded approval of each other's uptake. Explanations were unnecessary between these men of the world.

"Four o'clock on the dot," Mr. Shankland continued. "Here's the address." He scribbled it on the back of one of his own cards and put it before Ernest with a smart flick. "If that isn't fair and square, I'll eat my hat."

"Business is business," said Ernest with profound meanings.

Mr. Shankland tapped the table with his index finger. "*And if he's not there on the dot . . .*" He offered his hand to Ernest—tremendously sincere.

Ernest took the hand. Mr. Shankland strengthened the understanding with an added left hand also.

"Is it a deal? Take it or leave it."

Ernest mumbled: "Well . . . er . . . that is . . ."

Mr. Shankland said "Good!" with great finality of meaning, rose without another word and departed.

During the intervening hour-and-a-half Ernest strolled round St. Anne's Square and Deansgate in a jerky sort of fever. At times he hoped the rival candidate would

be late. At others he fervently wished him to arrive on time.

He himself arrived at the rendezvous three minutes too soon. Mr. Shankland was already there with the solicitor. On Ernest's entrance he held up a playful finger and laughed.

"Ha, ha! Impatient! Well, well, I quite understand. I should be just the same in your shoes. This is Mr. Fayle. Mr. Worthington—my solicitor. Two minutes to the hour. I know what I'd *like* to do. But we must be perfectly fair. That's my business principle. I think you'll bear me out in that, Mr. Worthington?"

The solicitor nodded.

"The papers are all ready, you see." Mr. Shankland took up a pen and dipped it in the ink. "If he hasn't turned up by the last stroke of four, he's no use to me." Mr. Shankland laid the pen in readiness on the blotter and smacked his hands together, and added: "Give me the man who keeps his word to the letter."

Ernest felt a sudden desire to bolt. He toyed nervously with his watch.

At the first boom of the town hall clock the office boy rushed in with a card. The solicitor glanced at it and handed it across to his client.

Mr. Shankland flung it into the waste-paper basket with magnificent annoyance. "I'm afraid, Mr. Fayle, you've lost."

Ernest felt suddenly chagrined. A moment ago he was hoping the other fellow would turn up. Now he *had* turned up Ernest was wild about it. He saw a fortune slip through his finger, as it were.

Mr. Shankland laid a consoling hand on Ernest's shoulder—a comforting touch. "I'm sorry," he said, "deeply sorry. You're just the man I wanted. Still," he spread out his arms, "there it is. I've given my word and I can't go back on it."

"It's hard lines, Mr. Fayle," said the solicitor, *"jolly* hard lines!"

Mr. Shankland was going to the door. He turned suddenly to Ernest and said: "Look here, you might as well drain the bitter cup now you *are* here. Just stay a

minute and witness the signatures. It'll not take five minutes, and we can pop along to Parker's, after, and take a dish of tea."

Ernest agreed. His rival was introduced—a Mr. Sparkes—a cross-eyed, unsavory-looking man, purple-faced, carelessly dressed and smelling strongly of spirits.

After the usual commonplaces, Mr. Sparkes took the pen in hand. Just about to sign, he turned to Mr. Shankland and said: "I suppose it'll be all right if I let you have the cheque the day after to-morrow? It's a bit awkward at the moment."

Mr. Shankland calmly and deliberately took the pen from Mr. Sparkes. "No, sir," he replied, "no, *sir*. Business is business, Mr. Sparkes. I gave you my word, and I was ready to keep my promise. It's R.M.D. or no deal. Take it or leave it." He made an intimate grimace at Ernest.

Ernest, grateful of the confidence, winked back.

"But look here," began Mr. Sparkes, "it's all right. You know I'm safe . . ."

"My dear sir." Mr. Shankland laughed and clapped Mr. Sparkes on the back. "I've given my word to Mr. Fayle here that if you didn't come up to scratch he should have first chance."

Ernest's feelings became distressingly mixed, but, taking all in all, he thought he had better clear out. After all, £1,500 was a lot of money—and it would mean facing the music with his mother.

He said: "Now don't worry about me, Mr. Shankland. I'm quite willing to stand down if . . . under the . . . I mean I don't want to butt in and that sort of thing."

"My dear fellow," Mr. Shankland reassured him with a friendly pat, "my word is my word. You have kept *your* word to the letter. Mr. Sparkes has disappointed me." He held out his hand to that gentleman. "But I bear no ill-will. Good-day to you, Mr. Sparkes." Pained but polite.

Mr. Sparkes said: "Oh, very well then," in a nasty voice, and pushed out of the office with what might have been intended for a dignified air.

Mr. Shankland handed the pen to Ernest and remarked: "Mr. Fayle, I think we can congratulate each

other. For my part I can't tell you how pleased I am. Welcome, my dear sir, welcome to the firm of Shankland and Co., and may it not be long before we change it to Shankland and Fayle."

"Wait a minute," put in the solicitor, "I'll just call in my clerk to witness."

Ernest felt again that almost irresistible urge to make a bolt. He said: "But I say, I haven't a cheque-book on me. I only thought . . ."

"Don't worry about that," said Mr. Shankland. "Mr. Worthington will let you have one from his book. It's only a matter of altering the name of the bank. Your name's good enough for me, old man."

Ernest thought: "Good Lord, this is going it a bit!"

He said: "Oh, that'll be splendid."

He sighed.

CHAPTER IX

I

FOR the first few days Ernest thoroughly enjoyed the thrill of being a business man. Mr. Shankland was immeasurably astounded at Ernest's quickness in picking up the general run of the thing. He told Ernest so frequently.

"For the time being," Mr. Shankland said, "you'd better hang around and pick up hints. You'll soon get the gist of the thing. I'm surprised at a chap like you, with *your* abilities, not coming into the city before. You needn't worry about the books at present. We use the double entry system, of course."

Ernest echoed: "Of course." Privately he wondered what "double entry" meant. He thought: "Entered twice, I suppose? Because we're partners, perhaps. They enter everything into two books. That's it. One for me and one for him. Easy enough when you work it out."

"Come along on 'Change," Mr. Shankland invited him. "I'll introduce you to some fellows. Don't bother about business. Just look around and keep your eyes open. Here's your application form. You'll get a membership card later. Firm pays for that, of course—four guineas. We're just by No. 15 pillar. High 'Change is worth seeing—especially if there's something doing. All depends on New York at present. That Brindley-Cargreave gang have been holding us up lately, but they'll go wallop. You'll see. And, by Jiminy, there won't half be a shindy when it comes off, I'm telling you."

Near the corner of Corporation Street and Market Street Mr. Shankland dived into a hat shop and came out again within ten seconds wearing a tall hat of gray silk.

"Always keep my 'Change hat there," he explained. "You're all right with your topper."

Ernest didn't quite approve of his partner's blue lounge suit in combination with the gray top hat.

Mr. Shankland caught the quick summing-up and laughed: "Looks comic, doesn't it? You'll see funnier hats than this, though. The thing is to be distinctive. There are eight thousand members on 'Change. You've got to make yourself easily remembered. If anybody asks for me they're told: 'Little chap with black beard and gray topper, near No. 15 pillar'—see? Easy! If I were you I should wear a monocle or something. And don't be too polite. They all talk Lancashire. Say 'Nowt' and 'Owt' and 'Gradely.' They won't stand any lah-de-dah business. If you bump into anybody, don't say you're sorry. Say, 'Get out of it!' and push! Use your elbows. Watch me. Here you are. This way. Come up to the gallery. Give you a better idea of the crowd. Now! What do you think of that?"

They were on the gallery overlooking the floor of the Manchester Royal Exchange.

Ernest looked down on a sea of men's hats. All sorts of hats—toppers of black, gray, brown, white; bowlers of all shapes; trilbys; tall hats of hard felt, of beaver; one solitary opera hat; nondescript hats that were neither toppers nor bowlers—mongrels with wide brims, narrow brims, and one that appeared to have no brim at all. Restlessly moving, swaying, intertwining—like maggots in a bait box. Here and there were little pools of floor space, momentarily visible, and then blotted out again. In these little pools of floor space Ernest saw legs and boots—all manner of boots from neat patents to clod-hopping hobnails. Legs and bodies in every variety of suiting—smart frock coats, cut-aways, and slack sacky things. A mixed assembly. Very mixed.

"Probably five to seven thousand on to-day," Mr. Shankland informed him. "Spinners and weavers from Bolton, Ashton, Oldham, Stalybridge, Stockport, Preston; agents; jobbers; dealers; gray cloth men; white cloth men; finishers, dyers, bleachers, velvet and cord chaps; calicoes; foulards; cretonnes; flannelettes; mercerized goods; specialists in every type of Manchester goods; engineers; boiler-makers; machinists; spot men; yarn men; brokers' agents and runners; fent dealers;

cotton waste marketers; shippers—exporters and importers . . . they're all there. You can buy anything in connection with the Manchester trade from a buffalo picker to a fully equipped cotton mill, fire-proofed and sprinklered throughout. This is the market for all Lancashire. There's a population of ten million within forty miles of Manchester. This is the hub. They all take their time from this."

The clock at the far end of the great hall pointed to half-past two. Unceasing streams of members were pouring in through the great doors at each end. It seemed as if standing room would give out; still they came and still they found room—pushing and struggling through the dense mass to their respective positions. The air was heavy with many breaths. High up here on the balcony the noise was unlike any other noise Ernest had ever heard—the buzzing of a thousand conversations, like a world of bees round a jammy satellite, mixed with the shuffling of ten thousand feet, or more, over the hard wooden floor; the interminable flap-flap of many doors—a bewildering maelstrom of noise; countless little sounds—clickety-clacks, sibilants, shuffle-shuffles, flap-flaps, paper-tearing sounds, hummings, dronings—all mixed, fused, compounded into one great chorus of forceful hub-bub that impinged on the eardrums with such insistent impact that those organs of Ernest's—unaccustomed and oversensitive—ceased to function properly and registered only a prolonged, high-pitched, shrill level shriek as from a mammoth gas-escape. Nerve-shattering, overwhelming.

II

A battleground: each separate entity scheming, finessing, struggling for personal achievement, for supremacy; each indifferent to the aims of the others. The atmosphere was electric with the clash of will on will. A mental thunderstorm seemed to be going on inside Ernest's brain.

The light from the huge glass dome became perceptibly weaker—weaker still. Melancholy gloom descended.

Suddenly, something clicked in Ernest's head. Hear-

ing came back. The shriek of the mammoth gas-escape ceased. Somebody below shouted "Lights!" More shouted "Lights!" All the world shouted "Lights!" A bunch of men just below the gallery commenced a rhythmic chant:

"Lights—lights—lights—lights—
Where was Moses when the *lights* went out?"

The thing caught on. Others took it up. Everybody took it up. Within a quarter of a minute five, six, perhaps seven thousand men were yelling the insane refrain—stamping feet and clapping hands to the rhythm of it:

"Lights—lights—lights—lights—
Where was Moses when the *lights* went out?"

Bang—bang—bang—bang.

Attendants came running with long poles with lighted tapers at the end. Gases were lit. A giant sun burner leapt into brilliance. The crowd below let out a mighty cheer mixed with whoops and cat-calls. The humming, shuffling and droning went on as before.

Mr. Shankland was bawling into Ernest's ear: "See that chap taking his hat off. There . . . looks like Napoleon . . . Nappy Bates we call him. You'd think he'd be one of the big men—a leader. Well, he isn't. Biggest darn fool on 'Change. Can't pay his office rent. Practically bankrupt. Now, see that big chap with the funny hat . . . like a farmer, big check suit, sloppy face, billy-goat beard—did you ever see such a gump? Worth over a million. Can't sign his own name. Never makes a note. He'll make a couple of hundred transactions in the half-hour. Keeps it all in his head. Never forgets a name or a face or a deal. Never moves from his location. Hardly ever speaks. See that crowd round him? That's how he does his business. When he nods his head it's a deal. Knows the game to the final letter. Never panics. Steady as the town hall clock. At quarter-past three he'll leave. Never stays a minute later. Catches the three-forty to Rochdale. Owns four big mills. Jonas Clegg—we call him 'Square-Deal Clegg.' I tell you there

are some rum chaps here. Now I'm going to try and make an honest bob. You do what you like. Better fill up your application form and get it passed. If you want me you'll find me somewhere around No. 15. In any case, I shall be at the office between half-past four and five. So long."

III

Later, when the crowd had thinned a little, Ernest, after paying four guineas and obtaining a temporary permit, ventured on the great floor himself. A uniformed attendant stopped him and demanded sight of his membership ticket.

Ernest showed his permit.

"I see, sir. New member. Thought I'd never seen you before. Quite all right, sir."

He got himself jammed in a crowd round a bulletin board.

"Still risin'," some one commented.

"O Crikey! Who can do business at those prices?" another complained.

A tall young fellow in front of Ernest turned to push his way out of the pack. Ernest recognized the Owen's crack left-handed bowler of his undergraduate days—Ronny Waddington, popularly known as "Pinky" on account of his complexion. Mutual greetings. Pinky took his arm.

"There's nothing doing here. Hardly worth while coming on 'Change these days. Come and have a drop of food."

They made their way to the billiard-room bar in the Manchester Limited under the Exchange. Glasses clinked.

"Well, Fayle, what are *you* doing in this den of iniquity?"

"Oh, same as you, I suppose. Dealing in millions, talking in Lancashire, and thinking in Yiddish."

"Never seen you here before."

"First visit. Just started in partnership. Shankland and Co., Cannon Street."

"What, old Take Shankland?"

"No, Frederick."

"Same. We all call him 'Take.' He always says 'Take it or leave it,' when he's trying to make a deal. Cute chap—buy and sell anything. Bit too much of a punter for my liking, though. Still he knows his job."

One of the billiard markers called out "Game!"

"Come on," Pinky suggested, "there's nothing doing up there. Let's have a hundred up."

They played a game. They were both good players and fairly well matched. Ernest won, reaching game with a tricky jenny from a dead red.

"That's a bit thick," said Pinky, turning to pay the marker. "I wish you'd show me that shot, sometime. It always beats me. What are you doing to-night? Good! Tell you what—meet me at six. Oh . . . anywhere. Our office then." He handed Ernest a card. "We'll have a nibble at the Munich Club and a little game and perhaps a music hall. Good! Now I must toddle. See you later."

At five, Ernest and Mr. Shankland met at the office in Cannon Street. Mr. Shankland clapped him on the shoulder and said: "Not bad. We've cleared over a couple of hundred to-day, old man. What do you think of that?"

"Damn good!"

"And trade's bad. Everybody's afraid. But that's where I score. You've got to speculate if you want to accumulate."

"Quite."

"Mind you—you've got to know the game."

"Rather."

"You're lucky, young fellow." Mr. Shankland laid a mysterious forefinger alongside his nose and screwed up one eye. "The point to remember," he whispered, giving the junior partner a nudge in the ribs, "is that you've come into a going concern."

Ernest assumed an expression of intense shrewdness and responded. "Quite—oh, quite. By Gad, rather!"

To himself, Ernest thought: "What an ass I've been all these years. Might have been making my millions. Two hundred in a day! You just stroll on 'Change, have a drink with a pal, come back and find you've made a couple of hundred. That's a hundred each—five hundred

a week—twenty-five thousand a year. Damn good job I've come into a going concern. By Gad, I should say so! Rather!"

IV

After an early dinner at the Munich Club, Pinky Waddington said: "Not bad grub, is it? And you get the best lager beer here outside Germany. The members are nearly all Germans. You should hear them eat soup. But they know *what* to eat, anyhow. And we have the four best billiard tables in Manchester, specially made by Ormes. Come along and show me that jenny of yours."

They went to the billiard-room. Ernest complimented Pinky on the tables.

"Never mind those cues," said Pinky. "Use mine. I've got two."

Pinky unlocked the two cases. Painted in gold letters on one Ernest read the name "S. Unwin."

"You've opened the wrong case, Pinky."

"You mean the name. Oh no, that's all right. It's mine now. Took it for a bad debt. Wish I could use it like *he* could, though. He *could* play billiards, that chap. He used to be in our office—cashier. Wild sort of chap. Very likeable, though. *Would* play poker. That was his trouble. Couldn't afford to lose—and lost. His face wasn't built for poker—you could read it like a child's primer. He owed a bit to most of the regular card players here. All of a sudden he did a bunk. Deuced hard luck for a fellow to have to do a bunk for the sake of thirty or forty quid."

"Unusual name, Unwin," said Ernest. "Where did he live?"

"In Ardwick. Near where *we* used to live. His father's a clever devil—invents things. His name was in the papers a few days ago. Invented some comic sort of loom. *He's* all right. Steady and strong—regular old brigade sort of Johnny. Church of England. Poor old Sammy must be a throwback. One of the best, but wild . . . couldn't carry corn. Silly ass, to bunk off like that—just for a few rotten I.O.U.'s; all small amounts—thirty bob, two quid . . . so forth. I've got one here."

Pinky searched through his wallet and picked out a scrap of paper. "Here it is—twenty-five bob."

A quixotic idea flashed across Ernest's mind. "Look here, Pinky," he said, "I'll buy that I.O.U." He placed a sovereign and a five-shilling piece on the billiard-table.

Pinky Waddington laughed. "What's the idea? You must be as potty as he is. Don't be a silly ass, old man. Come along and show me that jenny."

"No, I mean it, Pinky. Joking apart, I know his . . . people. It's only a matter of common decency. Can you lay your hands on the others? I'll buy the lot if you can."

Pinky put his cue alongside the balk-end cushion and leaned against the table, with his hands jingling loose change in his trousers pockets.

"That's damn funny," he said, "*damn* funny. This place must be absolutely mired up with good Samaritans. You're the second chap who's told me that. What's the deep idea?"

"No deep idea at all, old man. Purely sentimental interest. Why should this chap's people be worried to death when a paltry forty quid might settle the whole thing? See the idea? I buy up all those I.O.U.'s. Bung 'em back to where they came from—his people are bound to have his address. Prodigal returns. Fatted calf put to its intended use. Tears of joy—all forgiven. So forth . . . and so on. Simple! I made a hundred quid to-day. Might as well help a pal with a bit of it—if only for luck. Here's your filthy ill-gotten gold. Fork out the I.O.U."

"You always were a rum blighter, Fayle. Here you are." Pinky handed over the scrap of paper. "But I don't want that money." He flung the coins across to Ernest.

There was some argument about the money. Neither would take it. Finally they decided to put it up as a prize. Ernest was to concede ten points in a hundred-up at billiards, and the winner was to take the money and pay for drinks, cab fare and a music hall. Pinky won.

"Who's the other chap after the I.O.U.'s?" Ernest asked as they made their way to the bar.

"A German. Wartman's his name. He says *he* knows Unwin's people, too. I think he's already collared most of the others. We'll see. I can easily find out."

At the bar Pinky addressed the stout, middle-aged woman who served the drinks. "Good-evening, Mrs. Rickenbacher."

"Goot evening, Mr. Vattington," she replied with a guttural German accent.

"Two whisky sodas," Pinky ordered. "You deserted the card room? Where's Florrie?"

Mrs. Rickenbacher raised her eyebrows with great meaning and poured out the spirit.

"What do you mean?" Pinky pursued. "Has she got the sack?"

The woman laughed coarsely. "Dot's chust vat she got—der zack."

"But why?"

Mrs. Rickenbacher made a scornful sniff. "Herzelf only to blame she got—dat Florrie. Zome drouble she find. Mit mine own eyes I zee. Der zecredary he zee, too. She gry. Dat Florrie Radcliffe—she no goot. Always making der eyes at der members. Now she bay all dat." Mrs. Rickenbacher leaned across the counter and whispered. "A baby she will haf, dat Florrie. She gry. She zay she make drouble here pretty damn quick." The stout woman fired the piquant news across with an intensive venomous hiss.

As they waited in the porchway for their hansom, Pinky said to Ernest. "I spoke to several fellows in the poker-room about buying in those I.O.U.'s. It seems that Wartman has bought them all up already. But the funny thing about it is that he hasn't paid full value. He got most of 'em at the rate of half-a-crown in the pound. If he's doing it for Sammy's sake that doesn't look like cricket to me. But, there you are; these Germans have their own ideas about playing the game. Here's the cab. Where shall we go? Righto?"

Then to the cabman: "To the Alec. And stop at Bentley's—the tobacco shop. I want some cigarettes."

CHAPTER

I

THE models of the Logan-Unwin Hydro-Extractor and the Unwin Drumbox-Loom were completed within the same week. A show-off demonstration was arranged for a Saturday afternoon. Besides the doctor and the inventor there were present Anne, Polly, Mr. Whittaker, several expert engineers from machine-making firms, and, at the doctor's suggestion, representatives of the press.

Even Mr. Garside could not repress his curiosity at seeing so many visitors. He took up a strategic position on his favorite corn-bin, sucking at his half-smoked cigar stump, expectorating with infinite exactness of aim at all attractive targets within the limits of his projection. Watching hout! He beckoned to George Washington who was hanging about in the offing.

"Here," he said, holding up a halfpenny, "tell me what's in there and I'll give you this."

The *gamin* shook his head.

"Go on, dummy, you can use your arms, can't you?"

But George Washington was not to be drawn. He backed away from the inquisitive carriage-proprietor and leaned against a stable door, watchful of both the workshop and Mr. Eli Garside.

"Nice goin's on, I must say," observed that extremely horsy-looking gentleman. "What with them Eyetalians allus late with their stable rent, an' undesirable characters prowlin' around, an' dogs an' people allus comin' an' goin' an' I dunno what, you've got to keep your eyes open. I got me own superstitions an' I'm keepin' 'em to mysen. But I'm goin' to watch hout!" He swallowed a bitter mouthful of venomous sap from his half-chewed cigar stump and produced from his pocket a tattered penny booklet with highly-colored pictorial wrapper entitled "The Case of the Red Gulch Robberies," one of an en-

grossing series in vogue at that time, commonly known as "Bloods" or "Penny Dreadfuls." Mr. Garside extracted much pleasurable entertainment from these enticing volumes. The central figure of all the stories in the series was an amazing Maxim Dane—a criminal-hunting, red-skin-foiling, footprint-following, open-handed, free-and-easy, reckless, dare-devil genius who kept you gasping for breath and your hair on end from cover to cover; who could disappear from mortal ken over the edges of precipices, and fall into abysmal torrents below—still struggling with his half-dozen adversaries, and yet reappear unexpectedly in the middle of the next chapter, calmly pointing a brace of horse pistols at his enemy's breast, just as that over-worked, teeth-gnashing sinner would be in the act of ransacking the bank safe, with the heroine close at hand, lashed to a barrel of gunpowder. . . .

Apart from the stimulating thrills one got, at a reasonable price, Mr. Garside was keenly intrigued by the doings of Maxim Dane for the reason that he had detected a singular resemblance between that estimable character and himself. Mr. Garside noted that Maxim Dane always did exactly as he (Mr. Garside) would have done in the given circumstance. Mr. Garside's approval of his pet hero was absolute, and by way of expressing it he took unto himself many of Maxim Dane's peculiar mannerisms. Maxim Dane had a habit of chewing the end of a half-smoked cigar and rolling it nonchalantly from one side of his mouth to the other. Although it put him off his food and made him sick, Mr. Garside did likewise. Maxim Dane's favorite slogan was: "Wait, watch, and never miss the opportunity to overhear a conversation!" Mr. Garside vowed never to fail in these. What he ought to watch, and how long to wait, and what to do with his overheard conversations Mr. Garside knew not, but he kept on at these things, relentlessly—only stopping for meals and bed.

" 'Never drink till you've done your job,' said Maxim Dane, 'but when you *do* drink,' he added, pouring himself out a tumblerful of neat rye, 'then drink like a man.' With these words the famous sleuth swallowed the fiery spirit at one gulp and flung the empty glass against the stove, shattering it into a thousand pieces."

You can see for yourself what a reckless sort of devil

this M. Dane was. Whether it was the stove or the glass that was shattered doesn't matter much. It proved conclusively to the Garside intelligence that to be a strong magnetic personality one had to do these things. The first time he did them he was quite rudely flung out of the Union Inn, after being made to pay sixpence extra for the glass and threepence for a pint of bitter beer on behalf of a very strong-looking gentleman in corduroys who swore a piece of glass had struck him in the eye. After that ninepenny disaster Mr. Garside contented his conscience by drinking himself steadily semi-drunk—without the expensive glass-shattering business—every Saturday night, in a little public-house in Chancery Lane, where one could watch as much as one liked, wait as long as one pleased (until they chucked one out at eleven, anyhow) and overhear twenty private conversations at the same time. Further, it was a cheaper public-house than the Union Inn and just as near.

Mr. Eli Garside: sitting on the corn-bin; nourishing his soul with literature; intermittently wondering when "them Eyetalians" would pay up; what was the meaning of the strange goin's-on in Mr. Unwin's workshop, and why his (Eli's) dinner should lie so heavily on his (Eli's) stomach: every now and then letting his pop eyes roam the stableyard in search of clews—watching hout—waiting—wishing his front name had been Maxim instead of a slithery sort of thing like Eli! Eli Garside—ugh! Maxim Garside—ah!

Dr. Logan came out first. "Can't stop another second. Patients waiting."

Then Anne and Polly, followed by the bear-like Bruce.

"I think it's simply wonderful," Polly was saying. "How they can think out such things beats me."

Anne took Polly's arm.

"Let's have tea in mother's room."

"Won't she be excited when she knows?"

"Oh—mother's not a bit like that. She thinks daddy's clever enough to manufacture a new planet if he really set about it."

Anne called to Bruce to follow, and the two cousins walked arm in arm into Higher Ardwick.

Then the several expert engineers came out of the work-

shop, followed by the journalists, all avid for first-aid at the nearest bar counter.

"Good afternoon, and thanks for the demonstration."

"Quite interesting."

"Quite."

And amongst themselves as they walked away:

"What's your idea?"

"Oh—the thing's all right in its way. The loom thing, I mean."

"The point is . . . will it save money?"

"Ah . . . that's the point."

"That's just it."

"I think so too."

"Quite."

The last to leave was Mr. Whittaker. He said:

"Well, now you've lit the fuse, Arthur, I think it'll go off all right. So long. See you to-morrow."

Clews!

Mr. Garside produced a stubby pencil, sucked it thoughtfully and made marginal notes in the tattered "blood."

"Seakrit meatings. Sumthink as gose of. Anerkiss praps. Look out for Boms."

II

The chill of approaching night urged the suspicious Eli towards indoors. He strolled across the cobbles, as he imagined Mr. Maxim Dane would stroll—legs somewhat bowed as after days and nights in the saddle, cigar stump in mouth, right arm hanging loosely at the side ready for a lightning draw from the hip should danger threaten. Just as he was about to enter his back door he caught sight of a woman furtively peeping into the mews from the shadow of the bottle-neck archway.

Another clew. Watch . . . and wait. His pop eyes did their best to roll with delight. The ubiquitous G. Washington had dematerialized—vanished.

The woman, wearing a poke bonnet and a shawl, bobbed across the yard to the workshop-door at the end on the right, knocked, and, a moment or two later, entered.

The pop-eyed sleuth chewed at his cigar, waited in the

shadows by the workshop-door . . . watched . . . and overheard.

Clews! The place was littered up with clews!

III

This is what Mr. Garside overheard:

"It's about my daughter, sir."

"Yes. Sit down, Mrs. Radcliffe. Yes. Go on. About your daughter."

"Yes, sir. P'raps you'll call her to mind. Nice, good-looking girl. Used to come and do for Mrs. Unwin, sir, when I was feeling a bit queer like. Florrie, we call her, sir."

"Florrie? Yes, I remember."

"Well—you'll excuse me saying it, being her mother like, an' heaven knows she's a good girl our Florrie, if ever there was one, though I says it. She come to me this morning just as I was leavin' home. Like as it might be I'm talkin' to you now, she says, 'Mother,' she says, 'it's all up with me,' she says, an' starts cryin'. 'Now don't cry,' I says; bein' her mother like, I says, '*What's* all up with you? Sit down on that there sofy,' I says, 'an' get it off your chest.' So she sits her down on the sofy, like it might be where you're sittin' now, and she says: 'Mother,' she says, 'it's not my fault,' she says, 'it's through bein' so easy led, an' him so always beggin' an' beggin' an' good-lookin' that I was clean led away,' she says. I says, 'What you been an' gone an' done now?' I says. 'I know as it's nothink wrong, as you're me own child,' I says, 'an' whatever's 'appened I know as you're not to blame. Come what may, I'll swear that,' I says. 'An' you can trust your own mother that's bore you an' knows 'er way about,' which nobody can't say as I don't, me bein' nigh on fifty come next April. I says, 'Out with it an' tell me straight, knowin' as you'll tell me no lies.' Well she ups an' says: 'I'll tell you straight, mother,' she says. 'I'm in trouble,' she says, 'an' me a straight girl, God knows,' she says. 'Who is it?' I says. 'Tell me 'is name, an' he's got to ack like a gentleman,' I says, 'or me name's not Liza Radcliffe'—Liza Timpson as was like. An' when she tole me who it was you could ha' knocked

me down with a feather, an' me over thirteen stone. I says, 'I won't believe it; not 'im,' I says. 'What with me goin' there reg'lar an' knowin' what nice respeckable people they are an' always 'as been'; beggin' your pardon, sir, though I says it myself to your face—'Mr. Unwin's a *h*onest gent if ever there was one,' I says, 'an' you may be sure as 'e'll see that fair's fair and right's no man's wrong,' as is only just an' to be expected, sir. 'He wears his tall 'at on Sundays,' I says, 'an' *'e'll* see as you're treated fair an' square or I'm no judge.' I says, 'I'll go an' see him myself,' I says, 'for the Lord knows *we* can't afford no doctor's bills an' another mouth to feed and clothe, me knowin' what it costs with a midwife runnin' in an' out, an' the awful disgrace,' I says, 'God knows it's 'ard on a woman, best of times, without bringin' others into the world, an' innocent at that!' God knows, sir, I'm so upset that I can't bear to think about it, let alone talk.

Mr. Garside, wide-eyed, waited and listened for more.

A long silence, broken only by sniffs and sobs. Then Mr. Unwin's voice—choking, almost inaudible. Eli had to creep near to the doorway to catch the words.

"Whom—do—you—accuse? Come—speak up—why do you come to me?"

"I hardly like to tell you, sir, but what must be must. It's your son, sir, Mr. Sam, an' I says to her, I says . . ."

At that moment a light lorry came bumping and rattling over the cobbles into the yard. Eli recognized it as the fruit-lorry of the brothers Moroni. It drew up just opposite the stable next door to Mr. Unwin's workshop. Eli flattened himself as much as possible against the wall. The driver unlocked the stable door and started to unbuckle the horse's harness.

Mr. Garside tiptoed across the mews, while the Italian was occupied with his work, and slung along the opposite side towards his own back door. Before he reached that refuge it was suddenly opened. Eli saw his ample wife silhouetted against the yellow gaslight.

She called: *"Eeee*-li! E-*liiii!* Tea's ready. You'd better come in and have it at once if you don't want it to go cold."

Eli called back: "Comin', love."

As he sauntered in, with a characteristic Maxim Dane saunter, he muttered under his breath—even as the great Dane himself might have muttered: "When you've got a job on hand, trust a woman for butting in and spoilin' heverything."

Eli Garside—ugh! *Maxim* Garside—sleuth—ah!

IV

The marketing of the Unwin Drumbox-Loom and the Logan-Unwin Hydro-Extractor happened propitiously in time for the exhibition of cotton-mill machinery at the St. James's Hall, Manchester, in April, 1887. Articles concerning the two devices appeared in the trade papers. Mr. Unwin was hailed as a benefactor, a great inventor, a genius. Reporters from daily papers interviewed him, worked up his copy, often beyond recognition, probed into his future plans and announced that he expected to turn out a machine within the next few months that would revolutionize the cotton-spinning industry—mysteriously hinting at a novel type of mule that would minimize headstock friction and thus reduce loss through breakages, at the same time practically eliminating fire risk so far as that particular machine—the mule—was concerned.

Dr. Logan and he spent many hours together discussing details of the new project. Mr. Unwin opened out under the young man's enthusiasm. Often he found himself explaining lucidly to the doctor points that had to himself seemed insoluble before. Ideas that had run in circles, and ended where they had begun, clarified themselves and arranged themselves in fitting sequence in these symposia. The lack of the one became the inspiration of the other. As the machine grew into being it became impossible to say which of the joint inventors was responsible for any particular part. It developed, as their first creation had developed, by a natural gravitation of improvement to improvement. It appeared that they did not so much invent as recognize necessities.

"We don't really create anything," said Mr. Unwin. "The materials we use have been waiting to be used since time began. We only bring these scraps of metal into

juxtaposition with certain mathematical laws. We direct the force of steam and the pull of the earth through these little combinations of cogs, pistons, cylinders, ratchets, and gadgets to serve our ends—and we call ourselves inventors. After all we only arrange."

"Surprising nature's secrets," put in the doctor. "That's what we're doing. Man, it's a grand game."

"The point is *why*? What drives us to this? It isn't just that money attracts. I've been doing it all my life for bare expenses."

"It's the way we're fashioned, I suppose," Dr. Logan suggested. "It's the same law that makes the wee birds build their nests. There's something of race instinct about it. It's the way of man to solidify his position. This machine here's merely an extension of the flint arrow-head. We're all still actuated by the same laws that made the cave man a fighter and a hunter. Women must continue the race. Men must protect it—feed it, clothe it, fight for it. Civilization is nothing but departmentalized savagery."

V.

One morning, while Mr. Unwin was busy at the new machine, and George Washington engaged in filling the water cistern in the loft, a visitor presented himself at the workshop door: a visitor who caused the watchful Bruce to growl ominously.

Mr. Unwin looked up from his work to see before him the only person in the world against whom he harbored bitterness—Mr. Adolf Wartman—the German mechanic who had cheated him four years previously.

"What do you want?" Mr. Unwin demanded brusquely.

The German held his hat in his hand. He replied without a trace of accent. "Mr. Unwin, I do not come to re-open an old wound. On the contrary, it is my wish to heal a new one. It's about your son."

Mr. Unwin checked himself. He had been about to tell the German to take himself elsewhere.

"I assure you, sir," Mr. Wartman continued quietly and calmly, "my visit is in the interests of your son." He glanced around the stable-yard—empty save for Mr.

Garside chewing his cigar by his own back door at the further end. "If you will spare me a few minutes in private. . . ."

Mr. Unwin said: "Wait a moment," and went into the office department of the workshop. After covering the partly constructed mule-model with black sheeting he called out: "Come in."

Mr. Wartman entered. He was not invited to sit down.

"Well, about my son—what is it?"

"I will be brief, sir. You are aware, I suppose, that your son is a member of the Munich Club in Oxford Road? No? Well, it is so. I too am a member. One time, when I was in difficult circumstances, your son rendered me a certain service: a service I cannot forget. Some months ago he confided in me. He told me there was a pressing reason for him to leave this country. I begged him to let me help him if such a thing were possible. Beholden to him as I was, it was natural that I should wish to return kindness for kindness. However, he assured me that his trouble was beyond my help, and I have not seen him since. One surmises he went abroad. The members at the club remarked on his continued absence. He owed money to various members; only small amounts, it is true, but sufficient in the aggregate to embarrass one in his position. At the club one cannot help hearing things. Many members were in possession of I.O.U.'s—card debts. There was talk of your son's name being brought before the committee. It would have meant his expulsion from the club. Such a thing is unpleasant. I again bethought me of his kindness to me. Here was my opportunity to render him some small service—not much, I confess, but it saves the good name of a friend. Here, sir," Mr. Wartman handed an envelope to the inventor, "here are the I.O.U.'s. I took it upon myself to honor them on your son's account. They are all there. All but one. The remaining I.O.U. is in the possession of another friend—Mr. Waddington—who is equally desirous of maintaining your son's good name. I have been hoping to hear from your son, to know his address. But, no. One hears no news. It might be he is grieving. I know not of that. But undoubtedly you will know his address. I beg of you to send these notes

to him. That is all, sir. Now I go, sir, and I am sorry to have troubled you."

Mr. Wartman turned to leave.

"One moment," Mr. Unwin interposed, "I cannot understand why you do this, Wartman. In view of our relations in the past, your . . . generosity is incomprehensible."

The German looked appealingly at his former employer. "I beg you, sir, not to speak of the past." He spoke as if under stress of emotion. "One tries to make reparation. After all, your son is my friend. So!"

Mr. Wartman appeared greatly distressed.

A sudden sympathy swept over the old inventor. This man was evidently trying to atone for his evil machinations of the past. In the four years since Mr. Unwin had last seen him the German had aged twenty in appearance. Worn and drab, he seemed weighted with weariness. Without asking for payment he had rendered this service to one who could never acknowledge thanks. He had done this for . . . for Sam.

But perhaps it was a trick? Mr. Unwin recalled many evidences of the man's cunning. He opened the envelope and glanced through the notes: bits of envelopes, visiting cards, club notepaper—all made out in Sam's hand. Enough, it was no trick.

"What is the total amount?" he inquired.

"Forty-two pounds fifteen shillings."

"Wait. I'll give you a cheque."

Mr. Wartman put a restraining hand on Mr. Unwin's arm.

"No, no, sir, I beg. It is for my friend I do this." A sob came into his voice. "I beg you, sir, let me have this happiness." He removed his spectacles and polished them with his pocket-handkerchief.

Mr. Unwin was by now thoroughly convinced that the German was actuated by honest purpose. He could not tell of his son's death. For the sake of his wife that must be kept a secret. But he could forgive. A generous glow swept through him.

He offered his hand to the German. "Come, Wartman," he said, "let us forget what happened four years ago. This is noble of you."

Mr. Wartman turned his head aside.

"No, sir. You may forget, but I can never forgive myself. I have done what I came to do. It may be we shall not meet each other again. Perhaps you will think of me not so unkindly. Good-by, sir!" He turned again and walked quickly to the doorway.

Mr. Unwin dashed after him and caught his arm. "Listen, Wartman. I cannot let you suffer the cost of my son's debts. That you have brought them to my notice puts me under a great obligation to you. I must insist on paying back the money you have spent. I really must insist. Come now."

Reluctantly Mr. Wartman allowed himself to be persuaded to return while the old man wrote out a cheque. But, as Mr. Unwin sat at the desk with his back turned, the German took a small round metal box from his pocket, opened it and pressed the inner sides of the two halves against the big key of the workshop door that hung from a nail against the window frame. The action took less than six seconds.

When the inventor turned to hand over the cheque he had drawn, Mr. Wartman was standing abashed with his hat in his hands—the picture of humble contrition.

But two sharp eyes up in the loft had seen.

When the German had gone, George Washington carefully examined the big key and pointed out to Mr. Unwin a tiny particle of wax adhering to one of the tongues.

Mr. Unwin laughed and wiped the key on a bit of cotton-waste.

"You're a rum little beggar, young George. What's the idea of showing me that, I'd like to know?"

George Washington made a serious face and pointed to the open doorway.

At that moment a commotion was heard from the stable-yard: Bruce baying loudly, men's voices shouting, the clatter of a fallen bucket.

Mr. Unwin and the boy hastened outside to find one of the Moroni brothers—the Italians who rented the stable next door—pinned to the wall by the massive paws of the upstanding Bruce. In a half-circle round them were two grooms and Mr. Eli Garside, offering all sorts of advice to

the captive Moroni, but not daring to take any active part against the angry Newfoundland. Under the archway Mr. Wartman stood looking on.

The face of the frightened Italian was tinged a sickly green; his slightest movement brought a terrifying growl from the great dog.

Mr. Unwin called Bruce off and took a firm hold of his leather collar.

The Italian backed into the stable and burst into a torrent of abuse in his own tongue.

Mr. Garside twisted his cigar stump deftly from one side of his mouth to the other and tendered explanations:

"It's his own fault. Always swearin' an' cursin' at the dog. I see 'im try to kick it mysen. Thinks 'e can kick a dog like 'e can kick 'is 'orse. Them foreigners is no good; smellin' of onions an' never payin' their rent." Mr. Garside spat disgustedly into a sink with his usual unerring marksmanship and smacked his right legging smartly with his crop. "If that dog 'ad bin me 'e'd 'ave bit 'is blurry 'ead off." Mr. Garside's pop-eyes lit up with joyous appreciation of the happy thought.

The Italian came out of the stable, locked the door, put the key in his right-hand pocket and strode off. At the bottle-necked exit of the mews he turned and shook his fist.

"I tella yo, mista, I maka 'eem pay," he shouted the vendetta. "I smasha ze 'ead, I tella yo mista, I keela—I keela 'eem—I keela da dam dog, by dam eet ees true. Si!" He swaggered into Higher Ardwick with typical Latin enjoyment of the theatrical exit.

Mr. Garside produced a pocketbook and made a labored entry with a carefully licked pencil: "That's a threat," he observed, "a threat to kill." He pointed an impressive finger at Mr. Unwin and added the information: "An' killin's *hactionable*. You take my tip an' 'ave the law of 'im. A threat to kill in the presence of a hindependent witness—meanin' me. If that isn't good enough hevidence, I'd just like to know wot is."

Mr. Garside flicked the attached elastic band round the pocketbook and replaced that calendar of clews in the safety of his inner breast pocket with a very important air. Maxim Dane could not have done it better.

"An' I tell you straight—if I'd 'a' been that dog . . . I'd 'a' bit 'is blurry 'ead off—bit it clean hoff, I would—that's wot I'd 'a' done."

VI

Mr. Wartman followed the Italian up Higher Ardwick and through the railway arch into Chancery Lane. Opposite the fishing-tackle shop he tapped the Italian on the arm and said something to him.

They entered a little public-house together. An hour later they emerged, shook hands and parted company.

Mr. Moroni was patently drunk. Mr. Wartman was perfectly sober and looking well pleased with himself.

The German retraced his footsteps down Higher Ardwick, across the main road to Brunswick Street, along Temple Street and into a noisome alley known as Little Medlock.

Little Medlock was not a pleasant place; it smelt of many things. Dirty children played around a lineful of carelessly washed underclothes. Flies made merry about the garbage-choked sink in the middle of the flagged court. Slatternly women gossiped from door to door. A fierce-visaged man in shirt sleeves sat smoking a clay pipe, with his feet dangling over a window-sill. In the gutter a mangy kitten was making a quest for unlikely scraps of edible offal.

Undoubtedly a nasty place, this Little Medlock.

Mr. Wartman knocked at one of the closed doors. After a few minutes it was opened by a young woman, half-dressed, unwashed and with hair in extreme disorder—like a forgotten salad.

"Oh—it's you, is it?" she remarked frowningly, as she caught sight of the German. "Nice thing calling like this with everybody spying about."

"I've got something for you," Mr. Wartman whispered.

The young woman raised her voice for the benefit of the interested neighbors. "Well, I don't suppose mother'll be long. Better come in a minute."

She closed the door, when he had entered, and led the way to a gloomy, untidy back kitchen.

"Well?" he said, sitting himself down on a rickety chair.

"Well, what have you got?" she demanded sullenly.

"What's the use of being like that?" Mr. Wartman rejoined testily. "Makes me wish I had not come at all."

He placed a sovereign on the littered table and added: "See!"

The young woman evinced no interest.

Mr. Wartman jumped up and took her by the shoulders, "Look now, Florrie, I have had enough of this. What is the matter with you?" As his temper rose the slightest hint of the guttural crept into his speech.

She clenched her fingers and took a step towards him. "You rotten stinking German! Do you think I want your dirty money? You know it's not money I want. When are you going to keep your promise, eh? Tell me that, you low-down ponce, you!"

Mr. Wartman's body tightened and a hard glint came into his eyes behind the heavy goggle-spectacles.

The young woman suddenly broke into loud weeping and put her hands over her face. "Oh, Adolf," she cried between her sobs. "When are you going to marry me? My God! I can't stand it much longer. This waiting's killing me—I shall go mad."

Mr. Wartman relaxed. He put his arms about her and whispered words of endearment.

After a while she stopped crying and dried her eyes with a dirty handkerchief. "It's this staying indoors," she explained with fretful whimpers. "It gets on my nerves, and I don't seem to have the courage to get dressed properly."

"That will soon be all right," Mr. Wartman said consolingly. "You do just as I tell you. You see, Florrie, it would not be wise for us to be married before the . . . before the baby comes."

Florrie pouted and looked like a sulky cow. "But I don't see, Adolf . . . really I don't see what difference it makes; unless . . . unless you're wanting to back out of it." She raised her voice sharply. "You're not trying any of that racket on me, are you?"

"No. No, not at all. But do you not see, Florrie, you have taken the money from the old man? When the baby comes you will get more money. Look now. If I marry you too soon . . ."—Mr. Wartman snapped his fingers—

". . . it would spoil everything. As soon as you get the money we can go away together—you and I. And very quietly we get married to each other." He laughed pleasantly. "That will be good for you, my little Florrie, eh? So!"

"But you *will* marry me, Adolf? Swear!"

"I swear." He kissed her.

"Now," he continued, after satisfying her of his intentions, "where is that paper with the list of names?"

"About the people drowned in the wreck?"

"Yes."

She searched in a cupboard and produced the news sheet. It contained a list of the persons drowned in the wreck of the *Mary Queen of Scots*. Against the name of Unwin, S., was a little penciled cross.

Mr. Wartman folded the sheet carefully and placed it in a wallet. As he returned the wallet to his pocket he said: "Good!" and lit a cigarette. He inhaled with deep satisfaction. His right hand went into his jacket pocket and closed on a key and a flat round metal box.

"Well!" Florrie commented, "you look mighty pleased with yourself, I must say."

VII

That same day, later, one of the Moroni brothers, *not* the one who had sworn the vendetta against Bruce, came to Mr. Garside's office in the Back Coldacre mews and requested that suspicious individual to be so kind as to open the stable door. He explained that the brother who generally attended to the stabling of the horse had returned to the shop at mid-day, very drunk, and had lost the key.

"I can let you 'ave this one," said Mr. Garside, offering his reserve duplicate, "but it'll cost you two bob," and in his book of clews Mr. Garside wrote: "Key lost by one of them Hittalians. Highly superstitus."

"I'm agoin' to watch hout," said Mr. Garside to himself. "Shouldn't be surprised if summat 'appened! But I wish I'd 'ad the chance that dog 'ad. I'd 'a' bit 'is blurry 'ead off. Clean off! That's wot I'd 'a' done. Bit it off—*clean!*"

CHAPTER XI

I

OLD Dr. Beamish, after a prolonged convalescence at Southport, returned to his home at the corner of Hyde Road and Stockport Road, cheery as ever and apparently little the worse for his recent illness. His optimism had battled valiantly against the creeping clutch of time, and he took up his duties again with the same old kindly humor and bubbling spirits that had long since riveted him in the affections of his patients and friends. His young assistant, Dr. Logan, took discreet and surreptitious pains to ensure that the old gentleman's share of the work was made as light and easy as possible without letting him suspect that he was being pampered.

Undoubtedly the old gentleman was greatly loved in the district. Dr. Logan avowed that many people on hearing of the old doctor's return deliberately pretended to be sick, just for the pleasure of hearing that inveterate old story-teller crack his time-honored chestnuts.

Patients didn't want physic. They just wanted five minutes of the unaccountable galvanism that radiated about the quaint figure in the funny, out-of-date frock-coat, of the sunshine that sparkled from behind his horn-rimmed spectacles, of the rich love of humanity that streamed from his aged, but ever young heart; they just wanted the healing touch of an eighty-year-old man who had long ago lost all thoughts of self in the greater thought for others—an old man, as counted by the years, with a failing memory, who often forgot to prescribe a medicine, mislaid his stethoscope and went out without a thermometer. But who never forgot the name of a child's doll, and who could always remember to leave a half-crown on the mantelpiece in the house where poverty raised its head.

"Cold water—inside and out," was his favorite maxim.

A certain pill invented by his father, from whom he had inherited the practice, was generally prescribed for pa-

tients who felt they were being cheated if they didn't get medicine of some sort. The taking of this particular pill had a very definite effect. It removed many obsessions, and was known as "old Beamish's knock-out."

He had Mrs. Unwin downstairs again and going about her household duties within a week of his return to harness.

On her telling him of Sam's strange disappearance he informed her confidentially that he had always thought Sam would be up to some monkey trick of that sort. "He's got the adventurous spirit," he said, patting the faded little lady's hand. "It's some wild gypsy strain coming out. But, bless my soul, madam, what's a man for if it isn't to strike out for himself and make his fortune in his own little way? Look at my own brother Walter. Ran away from home when he was fourteen. Look at him now. One of the richest men in Australia. Lucky Walt Beamish, they call him. Doesn't know what to do with his money. It's in the blood with some lads. They carry a gold-mine photographed on their brains, and they don't need any telling when they stumble across it in their travels."

The old man started his jerky little laugh. "Sam's all right, you'll see. He'll be back before you can say Jack Robinson, with his pockets bulging with money. I know 'em—these young fellows. Did I ever tell you that one about the chap who discovered a diamond mine in Africa through a lame donkey . . .?"

And, before he could finish, the wheezing Alice and Mrs. Unwin were in convulsions, and the doctor himself staggering under the intoxication of his own jollity.

II

To celebrate his return Dr. Beamish arranged a little supper party at his own house and invited his old friends Mr. Unwin and Mr. Whittaker. "Just a little stag party," he called it. Just the four of them—including Dr. Logan.

Rare old hock and burgundy from the doctor's carefully stocked cellar loosened tongues and set the old fellows yarning and exchanging reminiscences of their younger days.

"Do you remember, John, that day in '46 . . . Old Prescot . . . you remember old Prescot, Arthur, used to keep the Ram's Head at Disley. . . ."

"Once . . . I was only about fourteen at the time . . . a bit before your day . . . it was in the great trade boom, six years or so after Waterloo . . . my father . . ."

So on.

Before the end of the supper the younger doctor had to leave to attend an urgent confinement case. Over the cigars, after the port had been thrice round, Dr. Beamish installed his visitors in comfortable armchairs and addressed them with an unusual gravity of manner.

"Now, John and Arthur," he began, "I have something important to tell you both, and a favor to ask. I'll put the favor first."

The two old friends expressed readiness to do anything within their power and assured him of their undivided attention. The doctor looked meditatively at his glowing cigar-end for a moment and then spoke:

"This last little illness of mine has brought me up sharply to realities. I'm an old man. Tut-tut. . . . I know all about the twenty years you're going to fling at me. I'm eighty! And I haven't yet made my will. It's about that I want to ask you. For certain reasons, it will be necessary for my poor little estate to be held in trust for a time after my death. I want to ask you, John and Arthur, if you will act as my trustees. But before you say 'Yes' definitely, I want to tell you, in confidence, of a rather unpleasant . . . history.

"Provided that you agree with my plans after hearing this history—and approve of my motives—are you, my old friends, are you willing to act as trustees under my will?

"I thank you both. Very well, then. This is the story it is necessary you should know. For reasons you will appreciate I am not in a position to mention real names in connection with the affair, nor can I give exact dates. I submit the facts, under bond as it were, to the parity of your reasonings, for your final choice as to whether you will undertake the trust or not.

"Smoke away and let me tell the story in my own fashion."

The doctor settled himself in his armchair and began:

III

Dr. Beamish's Story

During my younger days as a medical student I was greatly fascinated by the study of what we used to call Mesmerism. In spite of considerable ridicule I took it up seriously, and in company with Dr. Braid—perhaps you won't remember him, he died nearly thirty years ago—I practiced the method of Mesmer, with results sufficient to indicate the enormous possibilities of the science once the barrier of popular skepticism could be broken down.

For many years Braid and I joined in experiments and research. We agreed largely, and differed but slightly. On one point we split. While Braid deprecated the use of therapeutic hypnotics in cases of insanity, I applied myself whole-heartedly in that direction. My father held this practice here as his father had held it before him. In turn it would become mine. There was no need for me to worry about a career, and when, through Dr. Braid's friendly offices, I was offered a comfortable, though not very highly paid, job at the Prestwich Lunatic Asylum, naturally—I jumped at it with both hands open.

Here's where you come in, John. (Dr. Beamish pointed his cigar at Mr. Whittaker.) It was during the time you were acting as dispenser at the asylum that a certain woman was admitted and placed particularly in my care.

She had completely and absolutely lost her memory. I had her under close observation. There could be no question of trickery. A partly healed contusion on the scalp pointed to a blow from a heavy implement. It could not have been made by a mere fall. The clothing bore no markings of identification. There were no clews as to who she could be. Her age was perhaps thirty. The most horrible thing about it was . . . *she was going to have a child.*

I tried all I could to rivet her attention—to inspire her with some sort of interest. But it was of no avail. She just mooned about taking no notice of anything. She ate little. The thing that puzzled me most was her wakefulness. I'll swear she never slept. In bed at night she

lay staring into the semi-darkness of the ward, her face entirely devoid of expression. No emotion showed itself on those placid features. If there's such a thing as a lost soul that poor woman was one. When you looked at her she didn't register any sort of attention. She just looked—not exactly through you—sort of *into* you—and more than that—far and away beyond the reaches of your soul she looked. A poor vacant ghost.

And she was to bring a child into the world!

As a case she attracted me powerfully, but as a freak of humanity . . . poor staring phantom . . .

Good God! The thought of her makes me feel clammy even now.

(Dr. Beamish paused for a moment and leaned back with his eyes closed.

"You remember the case, John?" he asked Mr. Whittaker, leaning forward again to continue the story. "It was the sort of case one doesn't forget."

"Yes, I remember her perfectly," the chemist replied. "Not a bad-looking woman. She wore a wedding ring, and we called her Mrs. X. You used to take her photograph periodically."

"I was just coming to that," said the doctor. "I'm glad you haven't forgotten. The photographs are most important factors in what happened later, after you left the asylum. I'll continue.")

It was my habit to take photographs of the more interesting patients from time to time as an aid to the recording of progress. Nothing pleases those poor afflicted beings better than posing for a picture. In most cases of lunacy, vanity—excessive vanity—is a marked characteristic. They generally assume fantastic attitudes before the camera and take more pains to appear important than famous actresses do.

But this poor Mrs. X. never evinced the slightest interest. During the time she was under my care I took about half a dozen pictures of her. There was no variation. Always that same terrible tranquillity—absolute lack of intelligence—that calm, expressionless looking-in, -through and -beyond: as if her soul was frozen and suspended, still feebly alive, amidst eternal death. But it's indescribable. I might make a thousand similes—each

hinting at the truth of that woman's appearance—and yet fail to make you understand. We must leave it at that.

She took no interest at all in the baby when it did arrive.

The child was taken away and placed in the care of a foster mother in the workhouse at Crumpsall. It was a fine healthy baby—ten pounds odd at birth—big, normal, and gave no trouble. It was a boy.

Mrs. X. was soon mooning about as before. One of the nurses would walk her round the grounds once every morning and then leave her to carry on herself. She never varied the routine: just kept on walking round and round slowly, like an automaton, always at the same pace, gliding like a ghost.

The other inmates kept away from her, seeming afraid.

I made it my business to keep a careful record of the baby's development, riding over two or three times a week to see him at the workhouse. He seemed to take a great fancy to me. Laughed and gurgled as soon as he caught sight of me: played with my watch—a repeater with a jolly ring—twisted my whiskers into funny shapes —strong little rascal he was too—used to make me sing out at times: readjusted my cravat to his own liking—oh, a regular little busybody, I can tell you.

And he used to take one of my fingers and hold it.

I don't know what it is in a baby's soft warm grip. Gets me every time. Little beggars seem to be elbow deep in your very heart.

And the way he used to laugh!

That little gurgle of his used to come back to me at all sorts of odd moments. When I sat reading or writing—going about the wards. Even in the middle of a major operation sometimes I'd hear it. And I'd feel that little hand round my finger.

I had always been fond of kiddies, but this young gentleman struck some deep chords and woke up the most terrifying anxieties, the most bewildering desires to play elephants and bears and things. I found myself unable to keep away from him for long—began to call every day.

Some philosophers are very insistent in their "Beware

of Woman," but my advice to all unmarried men of middle age is "Beware of Baby."

Imagine the poor little beggar's helplessness: the fate that would be in store—a nameless workhouse brat. I tell you, I melted.

Picture my distress when I thought of his growing up —the workhouse education, the stigma that would cling throughout his career, the loveless existence in those cold walls of unwilling charity. Those puny fists battling with the world. Those baby eyes opening to the petrifying realities of what life would mean.

("Come, come, Arthur, your glass is empty. Help yourself to the port, and pass the bottle. You're not smoking, John. Another cigar? Please don't wait to be asked—prefer your pipe? Just as you like. I must put a bit more coal on that fire. Ah—thank you, Arthur. Let me see, now . . . where was I? Ah, I know . . .")

IV

Dr. Beamish's Story (*continued*)

I must not bore you. Always was a bit of a gas-bag. However, to return to Mrs. X.

One day, about eighteen months after the birth of the child, an accident occurred to the poor woman. I was away on a holiday at the time and didn't hear of it until I returned.

It seems that a careless workman mending a roof let a large tile slip through his fingers. It fell on the head of the unfortunate Mrs. X., causing such serious injury that the surgeon-in-charge was forced to perform a trepanning operation.

I returned to find my special patient only just alive. She remained unconscious for several weeks. I gave out strict instructions that I was to be called the minute she showed signs of returning consciousness; and one night, just as I was about to turn in, a nurse came along to my quarters with the good news that number 31 was awake.

Now comes another startling feature of this unusual case. The woman awoke to full consciousness, with all her faculties and with complete recollection of everything

up to the time of her first injury—the blow that had caused her to lose her memory.

She asked me numerous questions. Where was she? How had she got there?—and that sort of thing. I told her enough to keep her mind easy, and forbade her to talk more until she was fit. And I left word with the night sister that the patient was not to be questioned or in any way worried.

During the following few weeks I spent more time studying her case than was really fair to the other patients.

With the return of normal intelligence the woman's face underwent a great change. That expression of sinister tranquillity gave way to a look of haunting fear. I was at all times careful of the modulation of my voice when talking to her, and I had her kept in the little room alone, so that she would not be disturbed by the other patients. Gradually she began to trust me and to look forward to the little talks that I had made a part of my routine. And here's where my studies of hypnotic suggestion helped greatly.

Bit by bit, without letting her guess she was being cross-examined, I ferreted out her story; from time to time leading her back over known ground, laying booby traps, testing previous statements, bridging disconnected portions—until I had the complete facts.

She was the daughter of a bookseller, fairly well educated—she spoke intelligently and with a pleasant, not uncultured voice—undoubtedly she was well read. Her mother, half Italian, had died in giving birth to her. She had been educated in a French convent.

At the age of twenty she was wooed, fascinated and carried off her feet by a man of inferior position. His very brutality of attack, while disgusting her in many ways, attracted her strangely and unreasonably; and his sheer animal strength held her in a thrall from which her common sense was unable to free her.

Against her father's will and the dictates of her own conscience, her infatuation for this selfish mass of sinew carried her on its wings of unholy flame into a runaway marriage and a life of endless sorrow.

The very strength and selfishness that had out-

glamored her logic and her intuitions soon lost their attraction. Infatuation turned to fear, and fear developed into terrified hate.

The husband turned out to be nothing less than an erotomaniac—boasted of his amatory conquests, and did his worst to degrade her to the level of a beast.

She had borne him several children, and was about to bring another into the world when the man's cruelty took the form of misconduct, which he took no pains to conceal, with a young and pretty cousin of hers living in the neighborhood. Poor Mrs. X., her mind tortured to despair, took to dwelling morbidly on the horrible possibility of her next child's being a daughter. She made secret plans to leave her husband, determined that the child should not be born under his roof; but at the moment of her departure the man surprised her secret intention.

She could recall his raising a heavy oak walking-stick to strike her, and she described the murderous fury of his expression; but nothing more was she able to remember.

Her mind was a perfect blank from that moment until she had awakened in the little isolation ward after the long coma following the trepanning operation.

V

("So far," said Dr. Beamish, breaking off from his narrative, "the story is merely of an extraordinary medical case; and one becomes inured to the extraordinary within the confines of a lunatic asylum. But now the personal element comes in."

He helped himself to a cigar and waited until it was well alight before proceeding.

"Is it quite clear so far as I've got?"

"Well," said Mr. Whittaker, "there's just one point. I suppose you notified the authorities as soon as the woman revealed her identity? I remember old Joel was very touchy about that sort of thing." Turning to Mr. Unwin, he explained: "Old Joel was the registrar—a regular fiddle-faddling old busybody. Gave himself the airs of the recording angel." The chemist chuckled at some awakened memories. "Remember how we used to pull his leg, doctor?"

"I should just say I do." The doctor's face puckered up and his hand flew to his mouth to choke back that irrepressible jerky laugh of his.

"I could tell you some rare jokes about old Joel, but——"

The old man made an effort and became serious again. "Your question, John, registered a bull—a very palpable hit—and it's on that one irregularity that the whole thing now turns. Here's what happened.")

VI

Dr. Beamish's Story (*continued*)

It was in view of the registrar's touchiness, and finnicky horror of his books being wrongly entered-up, that I waited for corroboration of Mrs. X.'s story before notifying old Joel of the details.

In some way I can't explain, both the woman and the child aroused my personal sympathies to an unprecedented pitch. At her request, as she became stronger, and when I had told her of the birth of the child, I had the baby placed in the asylum crèche so that she could have the little fellow with her for an hour or so every day.

Most of the time she slept. I saw hopes of her ultimate recovery. Certainly the propinquity of her little one was a wonderful tonic, but on the other hand the dark shadow of her husband was for ever blotting out the sunshine of that baby presence.

She begged me to let her remain peacefully where she was; for a time, at any rate, to keep her husband in ignorance of her whereabouts.

I temporized. "For a time," I told myself, "it's no good giving uncertain facts to the registrar anyhow. Time enough to notify old Joel when I've proved her statements."

When she became well enough to sit up in bed and play with the child—Harry, she called him—I pretended to placate my scruples by making a half-hearted investigation of the story from the husband's end of it. With that intention I rode over, to the address she had given, one afternoon, to find that the husband had removed to an-

other district. The gossipy woman next door was only too ready to thrust her information at me.

I learned more than I had bargained for. It seems that the neighbors had been scandalized by Mr. X.'s heartless behavior in *marrying Mrs. X.'s cousin before Mrs. X. was cold in the grave.*

Evidently I was on the wrong scent. Mrs. X. could not be cold in her grave and at the same time warm in the bed of my isolation ward.

Obviously the poor woman at the asylum was merely laboring under hallucinations, and was not the wife of this outrageous cousin-marrying gentleman at all.

I was on the point of turning away—rather gladly, I admit—when the talkative neighbor burst into eulogistic praise of the lady now lying cold in the grave. A nice, well-spoken woman she had been. Quite a lady. Had been educated abroad in a French convent, not that she (the talkative neighbor) held much by foreigners—especially Catholics, of course. . . . That sort of thing.

I began to take notice.

Would I step inside a minute? She had a photograph somewhere.

The detective fever had by this time got me firmly in its clutch. I found a boy to hold my nag, and followed the woman into her front parlor.

She rummaged about and at last produced the photograph. There could be no doubt at all. It was Mrs. X. right enough. Then she showed me a letter, written some three years before, by Mrs. X. whilst on holiday, thanking her (the talkative lady) for looking after a canary during the X. family's absence from home.

Then she told me of Mrs. X.'s disappearance and the date—worked out by a weird memory-system that involved reference to many people's birthdays—and how Mr. X. and the pretty cousin had identified the body and given evidence at the inquest. It had all been in the papers. The body had been found in a decomposed state floating down a river. The clothing had been recognized as having been worn by Mrs. X. on the day of her disappearance.

By hinting obscurely at a sentimental interest, with the added lure of a golden sovereign, I succeeded in possessing myself of the photograph and the letter.

Next I visited the photographer. He traced the negative of a group picture—Mr. and Mrs. X. and the children. I ordered two copies.

My next step took me to the reference library in King Street, where I traced several newspaper reports of the finding of the body and of the subsequent inquest.

After considerable trouble I managed to track down the very articles of clothing found on the body. They were amongst a cellarful of lumber in the house of the court caretaker, labeled for court evidence—"Exhibit A" —and so on.

I verified the marriage of Mr. and Mrs. X., also the marriage of Mr. X. with the pretty cousin, obtaining official copies of the certificates by paying the usual fees.

Pursuing my inquiries—all this took several weeks, mind—I discovered that the new Mrs. X.—Mrs. X.[2] we might call her—had given birth to a child about five months after marriage; which means that *she was enceinte,* and had been in that condition for three months, *at the time that the real Mrs. X. had first lost her memory.*

(Here Mr. Whittaker ejaculated: "Good God!"

"What a contemptible beast that man must have been," said Mr. Unwin. "A man like that ought to be poleaxed."

"In all my experience as a medical man," the doctor observed, "I have never come across such a sordid case. However, to continue.")

VII

Dr. Beamish's Story (*continued*)

I compared the clothing of the drowned woman—we'll call her Mrs. X.[n]—with the garments worn by the real Mrs. X. when she was first admitted to the asylum. They were as unlike as it is possible for woman's garments to be.

Of course, I didn't let Mrs. X. know what I had found out, but under a pretext I showed her the clothing of Mrs. X.[n]. She assured me they were unlike any garments she had ever possessed. Further, she testified to the dress, shoes, cape and bonnet with which she had been admitted to the asylum as her Sunday best, and as those

she was wearing with a view to leaving her husband's house at the time he stunned her with the oak stick.

It was clear that Mr. X. and the pretty cousin had both deliberately lied at the inquest on the drowned woman, and it was also clear that the evidence I held, if divulged, would place them both in Queer Street.

What was I to do?

I took a week's leave and a walking tour in the lake district to ponder the problem.

Imagine my distress to discover, on returning to duty, that Mrs. X. was dead, and little Harry back amongst the foundlings and workhouse brats at Crumpsall.

My first impulse was to rescue the child from the cold hands of unfeeling charity. I arranged that he should be formally adopted by a worthy, childless couple of my acquaintance whose home was within walking distance of the asylum. After that had been accomplished I didn't know what to do. Weeks passed without my coming to a satisfactory decision.

About that time my father, whose health had been failing, begged me to return home to assist him in his increasing practice. Shortly after installing myself here the dear old fellow passed away. Naturally I continued the work that his father had started before him. My sister Clare, who had kept house for my father, continued to live here, looking after me. Dear little Clare! Ah, me! It's nearly twenty years since she died. . . .

Once, when I broached the subject of an adopted child, she was down on me like a cartload of bricks, and I chucked the idea of introducing young Harry here for all time.

That's practically all the story.

The boy has been brought up by honest, God-fearing people, and well prepared to put up a straight fight for himself.

This is the point that troubles me: am I acting fairly by Harry in robbing him of his legitimate birthright?

Wait . . . let me explain. His father, Mr. X., is now a very wealthy man. It is my wish to let young Harry choose for himself; he is man enough to bear the truth, and he is honest enough to act according to his own conscience.

My will, which is drafted out, awaiting only the names of the trustees, is to the effect that my estate be held in trust for one year after my demise, and if, at the end of that time, Harry declares to adopt my name in perpetuity, the whole of my estate shall pass to him; but if, on the contrary, he should decide to claim his proper patrimony, then the alternative makes for an endowment to a private asylum established by one of my friends some years ago—now badly in need of funds.

Compared with Harry's proper birthright, speaking in terms of tangible values, my poor leavings are a mere bagatelle. But it is for him to choose.

VIII

The old doctor unlocked a bureau in a corner of the room, and took from it a large sealed packet, which he placed on the table.

"Now, my old friends," he said, looking gravely and anxiously at each in turn, "before I go any further, are you prepared to undertake the trust I have sketched out? Don't be lured out of the straight and narrow path against your better judgments. My own conduct in this has not been altogether impeccable. Think well, and let it be 'Yea, yea,' or 'Nay, nay.'"

Mr. Whittaker sprang up and clapped the doctor heartily on the shoulder.

"You're a wicked old rascal, doctor, and I'm proud to say I'm just as bad." He held out a gnarled and knotted paw. "Count me in."

Mr. Unwin followed his brother-in-law's example and three hands met.

A happy glow suffused the doctor's wrinkled face. "Thank you. Thank you both, my old friends," he said, making an effort to control his emotions. "I felt sure you would stand by me."

For a minute the three of them seemed suddenly to have developed violent colds. There was a rather excessive display of handkerchiefs and a very vigorous blowing of noses, after which they all became unusually brisk and businesslike—almost rude in fact—while the doctor in-

structed them about the disposal of a certain sealed chest now lying at a safe deposit.

"All the necessary evidence is there: I mean clothing and that sort of thing. This package here"—Doctor Beamish picked it up from the table and confirmed the security of the seals—"contains my numerous notes, certificates, newspaper cuttings, photos and written statements of the facts which I have just related, together with a last letter to Harry. To-morrow the package will be deposited with the Williams-Deacon Bank in Harry's full name, and, immediately after my death, my solicitor will forward the receipt to him with instructions to collect the package himself direct from the bank. Everything is in apple-pie order and as safe as legal cunning can make it. No one knows Harry's identity—not even my solicitor, and *he* won't know it until after my death.

"The practice itself," added Dr. Beamish, "is now in course of a two years' purchase arrangement. At the end of that time it will pass to my young assistant, Alan Logan. And, by the way, Arthur, I'm very glad to hear how well you and he are getting along together. He's a stout fellow, young Logan. All moneys paid by him on account of the purchase will naturally be absorbed by my estate, such as it is, and the estate itself will ultimately pass either to Harry or the alternative legatees as time will show.

"That, my old friends, is all, I think."

"Except this," said Mr. Whittaker, pouring out two full glasses of the doctor's excellent old port and handing one to Mr. Unwin: "Your very good health, doctor; and may it be a devil of a long time before we're called upon to take action, eh, Arthur?"

"With all my heart, John. Doctor, your very good health and another twenty years."

"Thank you—thank you, my old friends," the old gentleman replied with a noticeable tremor in his voice. "And God bless you both."

CHAPTER XII

I

WITH no maternal buffer to absorb the shock—Mrs. Fayle was still in Paris—Ernest found it difficult to tolerate the slings and arrows of his outrageous brothers and father.

After a week of silent martyrdom Ernest made a stand and tried to tell them exactly what he thought of them.

They returned the courtesy with full-blooded gusto.

A terrific row occurred. They expressed the unanimous desire that he should go to a remote place.

The upshot of it all was that Ernest shook the dust of Cringle Elms from his feet and installed himself in a private suite at the Queen's Hotel.

During the week he rather enjoyed the novelty, but a rainy Sunday afternoon made him wonder if he hadn't been a trifle hasty. He looked from his sitting-room window onto the damp, soot-blackened infirmary. He didn't know why, but the sight made him think of his mother—as he had in his boyhood once seen her, accidentally—washing her hair.

Ernest was immeasurably depressed.

II

"But all this"—Anne waved a slender little hand to indicate Ernest's suite-de-luxe at the Queen's Hotel—sitting-room, bedroom, dressing-room, valet's room, bathroom—"it's simply ridiculous." Her warm gray eyes puckered up prettily in an effort to reckon. "Why, it must cost you a small fortune to live here. I think it's positively sinful."

Ernest helped her on with her wrap.

"I'd just like to know how much a week you're paying, young man," said Polly, adjusting her own cloak while Ernest was still attending to Anne. "It breaks my heart.

Did you notice, Anne, what he gave to that page-boy who brought the flowers just now? For a tip, mind! Half-a-crown!"

Anne shook her head chidingly and gave him a look that was supposed to be angry but which Ernest thought ravishing beyond words.

"Oh—you wicked man," she said, "how *can* you be so extravagant with so much poverty about? I wish you could see some of my little mites at school sometimes. Poor little things: sent to school without breakfast because there's nothing for them at home. It's heart-breaking. Sixpence would have been ample for that page-boy. Fat as butter, he is. Do you know that a charwoman has to do a full day's work for less than half-a-crown? I'm not joking, Ernest. It's very wrong of you—sinfully wrong."

"But I had nothing less than half-a-crown in my pocket," Ernest protested. "Besides the little beggar must live. You might not think it necessary, but I'll bet you his views on the matter are pretty strong."

In the cab going to the theater the practical Polly returned to the attack.

"Out with it, young man. How much was your last week's bill?"

"I'm not quite sure. No head for figures—never had."

"Well, after the theater, Mr. Ernest Fayle, you'll just show me the bill," Polly declared. "I don't see why you can't live at home like a Christian."

"As a matter of fact," he explained, "things are not altogether rosy in the house of Fayle at the moment. Little Ernest is a black sheep, and the dear little white bleaters and the self-willed old ram are of the opinion that he spoils the family color scheme. There's a rift in the lute—a fly in the ointment—a slit in the billiard-table—all sorts of nasty things. Bitter words have passed and are liable to keep on passing. Words I can't repeat to ladies. Tempers have been lost and no reward offered. Vengeance has been loosed and the dogs of war have slipped their collars. Brotherly love has covered itself in sackcloth and ashes, and hatred stalks abroad, while the little wage-earner, meaning me, is left to shiver in want at the mercy of the cold unthinking world. It's all very sad."

"Are you ever serious about anything, Ernest?" Anne asked him as he helped her out of the cab at the Theatre Royal.

He held her hand longer than was necessary and looked her boldly in the eyes.

"Only about one thing, Anne," he answered, "and that's so serious that it steals all the seriousness out of me and leaves me foolish for everything else."

Anne felt sorry for him. So perfectly helpless he was —like a baby. But this business idea was good. Contact with business men would force him to front the fact and stiffen his backbone.

The piece was *Tristan and Isolde.* The music and the story wrung Anne's heart in tragic appeal. Waves of sentiment can be so easily mistaken for the deeper tides of emotion. She felt so sorry for Ernest. She felt more than that.

During an interval Ernest turned to see those wonderful sincere eyes of hers lit up by an unusually soft golden glow, and the accidental meeting of their hands was unlike any such contact before. There was something new about Anne—something soft and yielding, yet compelling—that breathed gently of tender sympathies, that gave him hope and quickened his longing for mastery, for possession.

After the performance they drove back to the hotel, and Ernest was set to rummaging for his last week's bill. When he found it he handed it to Polly with the air of a schoolboy tendering a forged excuse for absence.

Polly pursed her lips and regarded him sternly.

"Fifty-seven pounds, eighteen and ninepence! And only for one week!"

Anne said: "Oh, Ernest!" and looked very astonished and annoyed and reproving. This man certainly wanted looking after. Was ever a man so foolish, so stupid, so childish?

"It is a bit thick, isn't it?" Ernest complained. "I think they must have added in the date. But then you must remember that bill includes a lunch for old Shankland. He's a terrific eater! Like a goat, he is—nibbles the flowers when the waiter isn't looking."

"Listen, Ernest Fayle, Esquire," commanded Polly, shaking an admonitory finger at him, "you're going to

give up this life of oriental splendor. I'm going to find nice comfortable lodgings, bed and sit., every conv., suit bus. gent., terms mod., h. and c., and you're going to know what life really means. Twenty-five shillings a week is what you're going to pay for your rooms, and fifty shillings a week's going to cover everything—washing included; and that slothful Royle of yours is going to seek elsewhere for free drinks and cigars; and the nerve-racking brilliance of this marble palace is going to mourn the loss of its best and worst customer. Those in favor say 'Aye!'"

Anne raised her hand and shouted "Aye!"

"Carried unan.," Polly went on, "and to-morrow as ever is this protective person sets about finding the aforesaid bed and sit. Do I make myself clear?"

Ernest caught Anne's appealing gaze. Clearly it was not merely a joke to her.

"I wish you would take better care of yourself, Ernest," said Anne. "It really is a shame to be so wasteful."

"He *is* going into that bed and sit.," Polly insisted.

"You will, Ernest, won't you?" pleaded Anne, "if we find them for you—please?"

"By George," said Ernest, "I would like a shot—if you'd help me. Never thought about it before."

"Then that's settled," Polly declared with emphatic finality.

As Ernest took them home in a four-wheeler, Polly artfully led the talk back to Tristan. She made them drop her first. When she had let herself in with her latchkey she chuckled delightedly:

"Opera music's a grand spell-binder. If Anne doesn't tell me a secret to-morrow night I'll swallow my umbrella!"

III

And in the cab Anne found herself listening, not without a certain happy thrill, to the impassioned outpouring of Ernest's plans, ambitions and promises—all for love of her; a profound sincerity, fired with yearnings that seemed to stretch from the beginnings of time to the uttermost reaches of eternity, expressed itself in the catches of

his voice and in the firm warm grip of his hand on hers; caught her up as on a mighty tidal wave of emotion and, for the moment, swept away all her doubts. She felt herself yielding. Infinite longings—sweet tremendous utterances of the blood—swelled and clamored in her breast. Ernest seemed at the same time immeasurably remote and disturbingly near. Swayed by a great pitying impulse to protect this man, she was equally aware of an almost irresistible lure more potent still—that magic urge latent in every feminine heart, insidious, reason-shattering, preordained—the racial call, the destiny of womanhood. And yet she was not sure of him.

Anne knew he loved her—as well as he could love anybody apart from himself.

"Let me speak to your father," he begged.

By a supreme effort of will Anne snatched back the shattered vestiges of her reason.

"No, Ernest, not yet. I know you love me. I want to love you. *Make* me love you. Let your manhood compel it. Work—work hard and accomplish something. Let your love command success. I can help you. I *will* help you. Be my knight in battle and fight, fight hard. Bring me your conquests and let me know you are strong."

He covered her hands with kisses.

"I will, Anne, I will. I'll pluck the brightest stars from out of the heavens and lay them at your feet."

"I wish you hadn't said that, Ernest," said Anne.

IV

And, as he drove on alone after seeing Anne home, he scourged himself.

"Ass! Idiot! Blitherer! Why *did* I say that damnfool thing about stars?"

And at the same time Anne was apostrophizing herself in her mirror:

"You little donkey! Giving way to sentimental impulse! Why didn't you choke him off properly? You have your work, a career perhaps, the best home and parents in the world—everything. Yes, I must forget this Ernest. At the same time it would be worth while if I could make him do something with life. And he does pull

at one's sympathy. Still, I must make him keep his distance."

V

In the next few weeks noticeable changes manifested themselves in Ernest.

Transition from the smooth-running luxury of the Queen's Hotel to furnished apartments in Kirkmanshulme Lane, Longsight, had the effect first of plunging him into a mood of unrelieved melancholy. The absence of the inestimable Royle forced Ernest to unaccustomed self-help in the matters of toilet and wardrobe. Buttons broke moorings when he tried to hurry. The bath took over half an hour to fill, and the tap marked "HOT" turned out to be a capricious humbug. Wax things under glass covers in the sitting-room robbed him of all desire for fruit. A picture of his landlady's late husband hardened his heart against his fellow-men. The landlady herself—a jerky-moving woman by the name of Horrip, who was constantly reminding him of her better days—*would* tidy-up his clothes, folding trousers in an original way that resulted in "tramlines," and putting left trees in right boots. And she sniffed.

Bitterness surged within him. But Anne's warm gray eyes in the foreground of his mind checked the impulse, often recurring, to return to the well-oiled machinery of the Queen's. The first week was a horrible nightmare. Mrs. Horrip's persistent reminder that she did all her cooking in her "own fat" aroused the most revolting mental images.

Little boys in the street made unfriendly observations about his silk hat. He took the habit of a bowler and reserved the topper for 'Change.

The menagerie-like smell of the straw-strewn, horse-drawn-tram interiors on wet days downed him to the blackest depths of pessimism. Wet days in Manchester do not encourage leaping mirth. The damp gray sadness of it all reduced him to a self-pitying inertia. The pull-up horse that lent its sinew to the steaming struggling pairs up the London Road gradient seemed a spectacle of misery incarnate. He felt that fate was doing something like

that with him too—making him pull impossible loads up never-ending hills in a land of incessant drizzle.

At Polly's suggestion he bought a season ticket and traveled by train up and down. Longsight station was only a stone's throw from his lodgings.

The warehouse in Cannon Street took nothing from his burden. The all-pervading smell of castor-oil, the sight of hundreds of gray cloth rolls in piles, the dark offices with cobwebby ceilings, the gritty boarded floor, the unhappy-looking clerks and warehousemen, the massive ledgers, incomprehensible with their brutal credits and debits, the dust-laden files of invoices and statements, the general bad-trade tone of it all, and even the confidential Mr. Shankland himself, weighed heavily on Ernest's soul and galled his spirit.

Going on 'Change wasn't very amusing when it came to the real thing.

Day by day the price of cotton rose, and every added point caused a corresponding drop in Lancashire hopes.

Mr. Shankland began to look serious.

The only glimmer of blue in Ernest's leaden sky was the occasional visit of Anne accompanied by Polly.

After each visit Ernest said to himself:

"Something's got to be done. I must have another shot at those market prices and see if I can't ginger things up a bit. I'll tackle old Shankland about it to-morrow."

At last, after a very serious talk with Anne, he braced himself to a long argument with his partner.

"Look here," said Ernest, "cotton's going up every day. You say so—and everybody else says so too, for that matter. It's bound to keep on rising till next crop. What's wrong with buying?"

Mr. Shankland dived into a mass of statistics and talked for a long time, pointing out the terrible risks of speculative dealing in futures.

"But all dealing's speculative," Ernest asserted.

Mr. Shankland had gambled before and had lost. But the fever was only dormant. For several days after their talk he was strangely quiet and spent much time poring over old newspaper files.

At last he unburdened himself to Ernest.

"I think you're right, old man. It's no use crawling

along like this. It's got to be muck or nettles. If you're out for a plunge, I'm with you."

They plunged. In one week, working in futures on a contango carry-over basis, they found themselves with a net £600 odd, in addition to their money back. The second week put them £1,300 to the good.

Within a month of applying the new system their profit had swelled to over £4,000.

Ernest became a marked figure on 'Change. Young men took to following his lead. His Savile Row suits gave him a distinction, and his light and airy manner brought a quick popularity.

"Cute chap, that Fayle," one man would say to another. "To hear him talk you'd think him a well-bred imbecile, but there's real gray matter behind all that. And he has pluck too."

But the older men shook their heads and smiled grimly. There had been snap-pointers in the past.

VI

The fifth and sixth weeks set the speculating partners slightly aback with a loss of some hundreds, and the seventh brought a drop of £1,700 from their previous profits.

The rumor of an imminent loosing of a large secret holding by the Brindley-Cargreave group caused a big drop in futures, and Mr. Shankland judged that the near-corner had broken and that the time had arrived to reverse their tactics.

In view of this they began to sell short.

The gambling fever by now had them both in its clutch; they abounded with high spirits and dashed about without regard to meals, anxious only to be first at the bulletin board. They sold and sold, and the price dropped and dropped.

Hasty sandwiches and half-pints of champagne at the Limited buffet were snatched and bolted, and then back they would rush to undercut their rivals by a hundredth of a penny on the great floor above.

By the end of April Mr. Shankland and Ernest were somewhere between eight and ten thousand pounds up.

Ernest was urgent in his demands that Anne should grant him permission to approach her father, and Polly backed him up in this; but Anne was sorely troubled. Somewhere, she felt, there was a catch in this sudden prosperity. She shook her pretty head and looked very serious.

"Not yet, Ernest. Let's make sure first."

"But look at the profits."

"That's just what I *am* looking at, Ernest," she returned.

And no argument could move her.

One day, about this time, Anne took a little walk, after she had finished lunch at the coffee tavern near the school, and reached the Ashton Market Square at the same moment that a procession of unemployed cotton operatives entered it from the diagonally opposite corner. At the head of the procession two men carried a banner bearing the legend:

WE ARE STARVING.
GIVE US WORK—NOT CHARITY.

Then followed an eccentric brass band; and after the band came the procession proper—men, women and children, eight abreast, ill-clad, pinched of features, hungry and sad. Some of the men were drunk, not that they had spent much money on alcohol; lack of proper nourishment during months had rendered them easily vulnerable. Physical stamina and will had long been undermined.

The procession completely filled the big square. Anne took refuge on the top steps of the town hall, between the two captured cannon.

A trade-union orator appeared on the roof of the covered market, at Anne's left, and addressed the crowd. He spoke with a Manchester accent and he rambled into multifarious metaphors, through mazes of statistics, dragged in fiscal reform and pulverized it with sledge-hammer platitudes, threw mud at capital and insisted that the working man was the backbone of the country.

"The mainspring of this country is the Lancashire cotton industry. [Hear, hear.] If we don't get cotton we

starve. [Hoots, growls, and cheers.] The Lancashire trade is sinking fast, and when Lancashire sinks to-day England sinks to-morrow. [Hear, hear.] We're all in the same boat. [A Voice: "What about the cotton speculators?"] That's just what I was about to tell you of. It's these speculators that's taking the very bread from our mouths. If it wasn't for the speculators cotton would be at a fair price to-day. Masters could buy, the mills would be working full time, and you'd all be earning a living wage as you used to, as you ought to do, and by God, when we can lay our hands on these vipers and crush them under the iron heel of labor, as you will be again. [Cheers.]

"These bloated speculators are living on the fat of the land, smoking their half-crown cigars, and wallowing, fairly wallowing, in luxury, while our wives and children are dying for want of bread. [Shame, and terrific growls.] I tell you, my friends, the working man of England is not going to submit. [Cheers.] He's going to open the rich speculator's money bags by the sheer strength of his good right hand. He's going to stand on the prostrate body of his foe with the banner of labor firmly planted in its heart, and he's going to shout to his starving wives and children in a loud voice: 'Here is food and drink in plenty: help yourselves and be full!' And victory will proclaim itself from a hundred-thousand lusty throats: 'Lancashire for ever and God bless the working man!'"

Deafening cheers broke out from the crowd. A cordon of mounted and unmounted police suddenly materialized all around the market square.

Angry shouting followed the cheers. Fists were shaken at the town hall—the most imposing object near at hand that stood for law and order. A brick was thrown, and a large window of plate glass tinkled into little pieces on the pavement below.

A middle-aged man near Anne said: "By Jingo, they're going to be awkward. But they'll only bring trouble on their own heads. See the police?"

Another: "The man's quite right, you know. It *is* the speculators that are causing the depression. There's plenty of cotton hidden away in America if the speculators could only be forced to disgorge."

Still another: "You can get Egyptian cotton all right."

Man at the back of the crowd, turning round angrily: "Who wants Egyptian? It's all right for the Bolton trade; but the spinning plants in Ashton and Oldham and Stalybridge are all made for fair-to-middlin' American. Talk sense or shut up."

Another brick came, ricocheted from one of the black cannons and struck the porch pillar just at Anne's side.

An attendant touched Anne on the arm.

"Better come inside, miss. There's going to be trouble."

Anne followed him upstairs to one of the open windows, at which several clerks were gathered looking down at the crowded square. They made place for her.

The mounted police had drawn closer together. The man on the roof was still gesticulating, but nothing could be heard of what he said. Several half-drunken men followed a crazy leader through the wide doors of the covered market and presently returned with their pockets filled with potatoes, which they proceeded to shy at the town-hall windows. A policeman received one of the missiles in the face. The crowd laughed. Somebody shouted: "There's plenty of grub in t' market. Coom on, lads!"

Another shouted: "Out o' my way, or I'll punce thee."

Those behind took up the cry and pressed forward; those in front took the line of least resistance and moved towards the market doors. A wild stampede resulted. The police charged into the mob.

Anne saw one of the rioters throw an empty beer-bottle at a policeman. It missed its intended mark and struck a woman who carried a baby. The woman fell. A mounted officer backed his horse into the struggling mass of humanity and cleared a space. Some one lifted the woman up. The officer dragged her across the horse's neck; the mob closed up over the space he had cleared.

The mounted officer, now using his scabbard, made for the town hall and dropped the woman on the steps.

Anne rushed downstairs quickly, to see the woman being carried inside the building. Without knowing how, Anne took charge of the poor creature and ordered an attendant to bring water.

For twenty minutes the riot continued before the police

succeeded in clearing the square. The rescued woman recovered consciousness and set up a continuous screaming for her child. Anne saw a policeman carrying in a sort of dirty bundle; she ran towards him—and saw . . .

The attendant who had first spoken to Anne caught her arm again and dragged her away from the horrible battered thing.

The woman was still screaming for her baby.

"Tell her it's safe," said the policeman grimly, "safer than it's ever been before."

But Anne couldn't speak.

For many a night her dreams were haunted by that hideous bundle in the policeman's arms.

VII

When she recounted her experience to Ernest he was deeply moved.

"It's terrible, Anne—terrible! That side of the picture never occurred to me. And, by Gad, the man was right. If it were not for the speculators the Lancashire mills would be working half-time at any rate. But the market's breaking. It'll soon be normal again. You'll see."

He paced restlessly from side to side of the Horrip sitting-room. Polly was talking to Mrs. Horrip in the kitchen.

"I'm going to talk straight to Shankland," he added at last. "If he likes to go on selling short, he *can,* but I've had enough."

Anne went quickly to him and took both his hands. "I'm so glad, Ernest. I'm sure there's a cleaner way of making money than that. Promise me you won't have anything more to do with those wretched futures.'

He regarded her with honest sincerity.

"I promise, Anne."

She suddenly reached up and kissed him quickly on the cheek.

"There!" said Anne. "I like you ever so much better when you're not thinking only of your profits."

CHAPTER XIII

I

MRS. FAYLE prolonged her continental jaunt until May. From Paris the Merricks carried her off to Switzerland—Geneva, Montreux, Lucerne, Berne, Zurich, and Interlaken, spending several days in each place of interest—and after doing Switzerland the little party wandered into Germany, returning leisurely down the Rhine and home again by Rotterdam. Mrs. Fayle had written regularly to her son every three days, pointing out frequently that she had already predicted the danger of his remaining at home without her, deprecating his quarrel with his father and begging him to eat humble pie and make it up.

After settling herself once more at Cringle Elms she visited Ernest's lodgings, driving over in the brougham.

"How you can exist in such a place is beyond me." She ran her eyes around the "furnished sit." and gave a voluntary shiver of disgust. "And you look so tired, my dear boy. Let me take you home with me now. You know how miserable I am without you. I've already pumped father, and I'm sure he's ready to go more than half-way to meet you. Never mind about packing. We can send one of the servants to look after your things. Come along, and don't be silly any longer."

But Ernest stubbornly refused. It wasn't a feud against his father and the male quartette, he explained, but a fight for his own self-respect.

After that she used to meet him for tea at Parker's once or twice a week, always trying to make him give in, and always meeting with the same stone-wall resistance.

Certainly Ernest had changed.

When Ernest broached the subject of his pact with Anne to Mr. Shankland, the senior partner said:

"Perhaps you're right, old man. If you're getting funky about it we'll get out," and he looked sadly at Ernest.

"It isn't that I'm funky," Ernest rejoined, fumbling with the buttons of his jacket. "But I've come to the conclusion that it isn't . . . I mean that isn't our real line, is it?"

Mr. Shankland took him by the buttonhole.

"My dear old fellow, I admire your judgment. According to the articles you really don't come into the firm until the final installment of the purchase, but," he snapped his fingers, "in matters of policy I like to know your views. You've got brains; and, I don't mind telling you on the Q.T., you've surprised me the way you've picked up the ropes. Now here's my proposition. On paper we are . . . what? . . . say ten thousand up, aren't we? Very well, then. You see how the market's dropping. I know it's tightened up a bit this last week, but that doesn't count; cotton's coming in from somewhere and there's no doubt the New York group's been holding on too long. They've got to lose now, and somebody'll make. If *we* don't somebody else will. I say: let's wait another week to cover. July fully-middling'll be down to eightpence again by then, and we'll neutralize as soon as it touches."

He tapped Ernest confidentially in the middle of the chest with an extended forefinger, and whispered: "It'll mean turning that ten thousand into twenty thousand. See? And then we clear out for good and stick to our regular spot trade. How does that strike you?"

So it was agreed.

"But it's a funny thing," Ernest debated with himself, "his dragging in that bit about the installments. Better have another squint at those articles."

He studied the complex legal jargon of the document in question. One clause gave him seriously to ponder. "And the party of the second part shall receive a nominal salary of three hundred pounds per annum in return for his active services, and may in addition receive further moneys at the discretion of the party of the first part such additional moneys over and above the aforementioned nominal salary of three hundred pounds per annum not to exceed a moiety of the profits in trade for the year ending twelve calendar months from the date of the signing of this agreement."

May in addition! Only *may*, not shall.

"I suppose it's all right," Ernest told himself as he stowed the agreement away again. "But it looks as if I shall have to fork out another £500 at quarter day. Better touch mother about it."

But Mrs. Fayle did not prove very helpful.

"Father's awfully worried, my dear. Of course, things are *all right*, but it's this trouble through bad trade that's at the bottom of it all. He's even asked me to hold over the household bills for a week or two. Until quarter day, he says. He explained it all to me the other evening. The people who owe him money can't pay up until trade gets better, and *he* can't pay the people he owes money to without realizing on some investments; and, naturally, he doesn't want to do that at present, because, with the bad trade, he would have to sell at a loss."

She helped herself to a toasted muffin and added: "It's all very complicated, but, if you ask me, it's this bad trade that's at the bottom of everything. I'm sure it must be very annoying, and I'm surprised at business men putting up with it. That Mr. Gladstone ought to be ashamed of himself, letting things get so bad. The papers are not speaking well of him at all at present."

And at the end of the week cotton was tighter still. It began to rise again with a steady persistence that made men look uneasily at each other on the Royal Exchange.

Mr. Shankland persuaded Ernest they had better wait before covering sales.

By the middle of June American July-cotton stood at ninepence (average). The normal price for the previous year had been 5.50d.

"Let's cover as best we can while we still have the chance," Ernest tried to persuade Mr. Shankland.

The senior pushed his silk hat back and continued to stare gloomily at the bulletin board.

"If it goes up another twopence we lose all we've made," he announced. "But it *can't*. It's a physical and mathematical impossibility," he added, pointing his thumb at a new list an attendant was in the act of pinning up. "See what it is? It's Liverpool buying. There are always some blithering idiots ready to rush in and grab. But you wait, my laddo. You stick to the wicked uncle.

Whew! There's no ventilation in this place; and just look at all the dust in that sunbeam. Come on, let's have a drink."

At the crowded billiard-room bar Pinky Waddington slapped Ernest on the back with a folded newspaper.

"Hullo, Fayle! Covered that July? Silly ass! Told you you'd burn your fingers. Much damage?"

Ernest felt Mr. Shankland's elbow jabbing into his ribs.

"Oh, just so so," he replied, with a bright laugh.

"We've come through this sort of thing before, Mr. Waddington," put in Mr. Shankland, "and I shall still be on the right side even if it touches ten. But it won't. What are you having? Good! Two whisky sodas and a brandy plain, miss."

II

Some few days later Mr. Shankland took Ernest out to lunch. He talked brightly and appeared to be in excellent spirits. He ordered champagne.

"We'll soon see who's right," he said with a knowing wink. "You see, the price has been practically the same for two days. It's the death trance of the Yankee group. They're flummoxed! And they know it. The stuff's *got* to come out. It's simply *got* to. They've got to loosen up their holding now or the new crop'll just fall on top of 'em and crush 'em like that—biff!"

Mr. Shankland pointed to a fly he had done to death on the tablecloth.

"But we must be prepared for emergencies," he went on. "Now about that midsummer installment of yours." He filled Ernest's glass and made a sign to the waiter for another bottle. "I don't suppose a day or two makes any difference to you, and a little bit like that in hand'll mean a big help to us in the market if it should come to a matter of backwardation. Not that there's any danger of that. It'll be down with a rush now. But we'd better be prepared. You see what I mean?"

Ernest, notwithstanding his affected indifference, had by this time a fairly shrewd idea of the ins and outs of the business, and his eyes were not altogether closed to the wiles of his associate. He realized the risk they were

running, but at the same time he recognized the necessity of standing by the terms of his agreement. Apart from the legal liability it was a case of playing for school.

He sent an urgent message to his mother. She met him the following afternoon at Parker's.

"I have never done anything like this before, dear," she told him, with a very grave look in her eyes, "but if you really *must* have the money . . ." And under the table she slipped a little leather case into his hand.

An hour later Ernest, humming a jaunty tune to cover his confusion, boldly entered a pawnbroker's office in Deansgate, with a little leather case that contained a pair of magnificent diamond ear-rings. And a few minutes later he emerged, feeling like a hunted malefactor, with £500 in bank notes.

That evening he entertained Anne and Polly with a humorous description of the Manchester Royal Exchange on a market day.

"I'd love to see it," said Anne. "Couldn't you show us over on Friday afternoon? They're using the school rooms for balloting and we have the whole day off."

"That'll be splendid. How about a bit of lunch first at the Queen's?"

"No, Ernest," Anne protested. "You know what I have told you. Not a penny are you going to spend on us until you're properly on your feet in business; and proper business, too, remember—not those wretched futures."

It was finally decided that he should meet Polly and Anne in the reference library at two o'clock on the following Friday.

III

Friday, the first of July, 1887, was destined to be long remembered on the Manchester Royal Exchange. During the week rumor had been busy with a thousand conflicting versions of the New York cotton situation. Fantastic stories found their way into the halfpenny journals. Sensational tit-bits of news, gleaned privately by telegram and telephone and cable, were whispered by one member of the Exchange to another, added to, subtracted from,

multiplied and distorted into terrifying caricatures of the original, and twisted to suit the personal plans of each retailer, until nobody could believe anything and was yet afraid to disbelieve.

Confusion!

"Brindley and Cargreave had split."

"The Brindley Cargreave group had been augmented by the participation of several American steel magnates in the near-corner, and the corner had become an established fact."

"Brindley had been shot by a ruined cotton bear."

"Cargreave had committed suicide in a Turkish bath. A mammoth secret reserve of cotton had been discovered hidden away in the Azores."

"There was no more cotton at all. The boll-weevil story was quite true."

"Half a dozen shiploads of cotton in bale had left New York for Liverpool."

"The Japanese Government had bought up the whole of the coming season's crop with the intention of making war on Russia. Washington was about to put an embargo on all cotton exporting."

So ran the rumors.

But through them all the *Manchester Guardian* maintained its wonted glacial calm, and quoted prices with unswerving veracity; the one unyielding rock in an ocean of panic, it even found shelter for other matters, such as the Queen's Jubilee; the cutting of the Ship Canal; parliamentary debates; the Eastern Question; Free Trade; Hallé Concerts; and reviews of new books. So untroubled was that dignified disseminator of daily history that it could, and did, allow itself to be tickled, in an academic sort of way—to the extent of one-third of a column—by the antics of a performing ape at a music hall, much to the chagrin of the unmentioned star comedians and soubrettes in the same program.

The *Manchester Guardian* was reputed to be the standard organ of truthful intelligence all over the world. Most Manchester business men bought it. Men who carried it in trains, from home to office, liked to flaunt it in the faces of the unsound. Manchester took its *Guardian* as a prophylactic—with the same faith in established things

as it would wear red flannel next to the skin during an influenza epidemic. Even if you didn't understand the leaders, it was a good thing to be seen with it.

The *Manchester Guardian* did not stoop for any Wall Street manipulators. It continued serenely to quote exact prices and to furnish expert reports of crop progress; but, so far as that monolith of granite fact was concerned, Messrs. Brindley and Cargreave did not exist.

The older men on the Exchange remained true to their trusted mentor and sawed wood. The youngsters inclined their ears to rumor and gave themselves up to panic.

On the Thursday—the last day of June—prices rose and fell with bewildering uncertainty; but on the Friday the move was only in one direction—upwards. Point by point the price advanced until elevenpence a pound was threatened.

As our two speculators stood at the buffet, wolfing sandwiches, about noon, Ernest looked anxiously at Mr. Shankland.

"Then you'll cover immediately it reaches eleven?"

"Bet your life," Mr. Shankland replied. "But you stand on me, it won't reach eleven."

"Well . . . you never know. Anyhow, if it does, you'll neutralize? If we've to settle to-day at four for all the July we've sold it'll be a near shave even with that five hundred quid. We're lucky to get one day's grace as it is."

"You leave it to the wicked uncle, old man. I know exactly what I'm doing. A chap just told me he'd had it straight from Macandrews at Liverpool, by telephone, that Cargreave's cut his throat."

Ernest laughed and said: "What—again? That habit'll be getting a hold on him if he's not careful; he's already done that three times this week, and he's been shot by Brindley twice—once mortally. One of these days he'll get hurt."

Mr. Shankland looked pained. He said: "Well . . . of course . . . if you're going to talk like *that* . . ."

Shortly after two, Ernest escorted Anne and Polly to the visitors' gallery overlooking the big floor.

Both the girls were disappointed. They had expected to see something more exciting—a sort of multiple auction

sale—men shouting out and bidding against each other, and piles of cotton. Surely there ought to be lots of cotton about on a cotton exchange?

The floor below was filling rapidly. The steady inflation of prices brought a bigger crowd on to the boards than usual, and, as this was also a market day, the attendance was very full.

"Now, as soon as you've had enough of this," Ernest said, addressing the two ladies, "we'll sneak silently away like the Arabs and have a cup of tea."

"Wait a minute," Anne begged. "What's the matter there?" She pointed to a struggling thicket of men around a bulletin board.

"Oh, that's the latest price-list going up. There's old Shankland—see him? Little chap with the funny hat and black beard."

Some one below shouted: "Fully-middling's up to eleven."

Ernest experienced a sudden dizziness.

They went across the sunlit square to Parker's.

And all through tea Ernest was telling himself: "Shankland'll have covered. Bound to have covered."

He tried to make himself believe that; the while he became amusing over butter-soaked hot muffins.

IV

After tea Ernest took the ladies across to Cannon Street and showed them over the little warehouse. The head warehouseman explained the qualities and prices of various ranges of cotton cloth.

"This is our regular trade," said Ernest. "We buy and sell any kind of Manchester goods. And now we're going to stick to this. No more futures. Too risky—I expect we shall be a bit down, even if old Shankland's managed to buy in the shortage."

"I'm so glad you're giving all that up," said Anne.

Towards five o'clock Mr. Shankland entered the warehouse; he still wore his 'Change hat, tilted back; his hands were deep-thrust in his trousers pockets, and he walked with a swagger to where the little group was standing by the weighing machine.

Introductions were made. Ernest awaited Mr. Shankland's news.

"Well?"

The head of the firm put his thumbs in the armholes of his waistcoat and puckered his lips as if about to whistle.

"Did you cover?" Ernest asked.

Mr. Shankland suddenly broke into loud laughter, and his face became very red.

For a full minute he continued to laugh, and then he seemed to have a choking fit. Ernest was just about to thump him on the back when Mr. Shankland slewed round in a half-circle on his heels and fell, the back of his head striking the iron base of the weighing machine.

Ernest and the ladies did what they could; but for half an hour—until a doctor could be brought—the head of the firm remained unconscious.

"He must have swooned," the doctor told them. "He'll be all right soon. Probably the heat. That bump's nothing. Don't worry."

The first words Mr. Shankland uttered when he recovered were: "We're busted—spot cotton's up above the shilling! Busted!"

After seeing Anne and Polly to the tram Ernest bought an *Evening News* from an urchin who was bawling "Terrible panic on the Liverpool Exchange."

Ernest turned to the stop-press.

"American fully-middling touches fourteen pence."

He ran back to the office in Cannon Street.

Mr. Shankland was playing a private football game all by himself in the warehouse. For a ball he was using his gray silk hat—now a shapeless bag. And he was shouting: "Fourteen! Fourteen blinking pence."

CHAPTER XIV

I

THE firm of Shankland & Co. was no more.

Busted! Caught short!

The going concern had gone; and with it had also gone Ernest's two installments of £500 each.

One thousand pounds. . . . Biff!

"Well, old man, I'm sorry about that little packet of yours," said Mr. Shankland as they took a parting drink together—a binder, Mr. Shankland called it—at the Thatched House, "but *you're* all right. They can't touch you for another penny. Lucky for you that agreement was made out as it was, or you'd have had to stand the racket."

Ernest's eyes were fixed on a ring of wet spirit on the bar counter, but he wasn't really looking at that; he was looking through it into the future—a most unpromising future.

"They've fairly squeezed me," Mr. Shankland went on. "Business gone—stock, goodwill . . . everything. Damn good job the furniture at home was in the wife's name or they'd have had that too." He brightened up a little. "What are you going to do, old man?"

"I dunno," Ernest answered. "Haven't thought about it . . . yet. What will *you* do?"

"Oh, don't worry about the wicked uncle. I'll soon be out of this mess all right. Trade's gone to blazes, I know. Notice that big Scottish bank failure in the paper to-day? That'll not do any good." Mr. Shankland buttoned up his jacket and pushed his hat to the back of his head. "But this sort of thing can't go on for ever. I'll get some sort of a job somewhere for the time being. Good buyers don't grow on trees, and I *do* know the Manchester trade. And then when things do begin to move you'll see the wicked uncle climbing up again."

They walked out together and stood for a minute in

silence at the corner of Cross Street, looking across at the smoke-blackened frontage of the Royal Exchange.

"Ah, well," said Mr. Shankland, pulling himself together, "so long, old man, and the best of luck."

They shook hands.

Ernest wished him good-by and "good hunting," and remained at the corner, watching his late colleague, until the little figure in the shiny blue suit was lost to sight amongst the traffic of Corporation Street. Shankland & Co.!—going concern!

Going . . . going . . .

Gone!

II

"Rum little beggar, Shankland. Poor devil! Plucky, though!"

For several days Ernest went for long walks—Disley, Wilmslow, Altrincham—trying to work the thing out.

To crawl home now, like a whipped dog? Impossible.

To continue doing nothing? Equally impossible—funds were running low. Five pounds odd in hand. That wouldn't last long. Then what? Obviously he must get a job.

He put the situation to Anne. She felt the weight of responsibility.

"Perhaps you had better go home again, Ernest? Especially as your mother is so distressed about you."

"What's wrong with this?" asked Polly. She quoted from the *Evening News*. "Smart salesman required for Manchester district. Lubricating oils. Previous experience not necessary, but must be of good appearance and address. Good salary and commission to right man."

"Why not try it?" Anne persuaded.

Ernest tried it. He received a reply to his application, and called as requested at a dirty little office in a mean district on the wrong side of Deansgate. Fifty other "smart salesmen" of varying degrees of "good appearance and address" were waiting to be interviewed. Ernest waited two hours, until a rude clerk shouted: "You're next" at him before he was admitted into the presence of a harsh misanthrope, who barked unpleasant questions and snarled unflattering comments.

"Know anything about oils?"

"Not a thing, except castor and cod-liver—both beastly."

"Ever been on the road before?"

"Which road?"

The harsh individual looked up at the ceiling and snarled. "Oh, suffering snakes! Oh, my godfather! Oh, hell!" Then he looked at Ernest with a sad smile and said: "Have you ever done any commercial traveling?"

"Never."

"What *have* you done?"

"Nothing."

The man threw his pencil on the blotting pad and buried his head in his hands, as if overcome with a great sorrow.

"The advertisement specifically stated that previous experience was not necessary," Ernest pointed out.

The man revived and spoke snappily.

"Salary?"

"I dunno. What's *your* idea?" Ernest finessed.

"Thirty shillings, and two-and-a-half commission."

"Good. I'll have a smack at it. When do you want me to start?"

The harsh man sat back in his chair and looked venomous things at Ernest.

"Who do you think you are, anyway?" he demanded.

Ernest couldn't stand any more. His mouth hardened and he said: "You mustn't talk like that. Be nice and agreeable or I shan't take the job at all."

The man's eyes bulged out of his face, and he seemed about to have a fit; he made as if to say something really stinging, but suddenly changed his mind and banged the bell with excessive violence.

The rude clerk shouted "Next," and Ernest went out into the street.

III

Polly and Anne and Mrs. Unwin went off to Bangor in the middle of July, and did not return until after the August Bank Holiday.

During those long lonesome weeks Ernest answered every likely advertisement in the local papers. He was interviewed many times. Amiable managers promised to keep his name before them, and would write to him further, in a day or two, perhaps.

The five pounds vanished. So did the odd. Then his gold chain, quickly followed by the watch. It proved hard to cut down expenses. By the middle of August he was living on his clothing and—the irony of it all—he heard that the Brindley-Cargreave hold-up had broken down, that the too-long-hoarded cotton of last season's crop was pouring into the markets, that it was being sold at any price offered to make way for the new crop. Lancashire mills were working full time again.

Of course, he could have realized on many of his things at home, but he did not want his mother to know how embarrassed he really was. They still met every few days at Parker's for tea, his mother remaining under the belief that he was carrying on his usual business with Mr. Shankland.

One afternoon she brought the startling news that Luke and John—the younger end of the evangelic quartette—had quarreled with their father over money, and were going to Australia.

"Father's giving them five hundred each. He says it's more than he can really spare at present. As a matter of fact, he had to give a bill of sale on the house some months ago. People simply *won't* pay what they owe him; and it's astonishing how many firms have had their money in these banks that have failed." Mrs. Fayle took a sip of tea and continued: "Of course, I'm sure things are all right really, but you know what father is. He *will* pay his debts, instead of waiting till people pay him. Matthew and Mark seem very worried too. They say the building trade is finished, and I know myself there are streets and streets of empty cottages everywhere. I can't make out where the people have all gone. It's most astonishing, especially now the cotton trade is doing so nicely again. I hear some of the mills are even working overtime. But, my dear, you're eating nothing. Do have one of these cream things."

IV

At the end of August Ernest sold the bulk of his available wardrobe, in order to buy for his mother a birthday present not too noticeably inferior to those he had given in past years.

And before Anne he contrived to keep up appearances. He even borrowed a smoothing iron and a damp cloth from Mrs. Horrip and ironed his trousers on the kitchen table.

The jerky-moving landlady began to suspect the truth of Ernest's pecuniary circumstances; affected a superior air; sniffed disapprovingly at his gradual curtailment of luxuries; exercised greater cunning in the manipulation of her accounts against him, and sighed with obvious relief after each settlement. Mrs. Horrip was not without experience of gentlemen lodgers who lost their situations. She knew the signs. But this Mr. Fayle was not quite like the others. And again, hadn't his mother called on him one day in a private carriage with coachman and footman all got up regardless? Mrs. Horrip had made the most of that event. All the neighbors had seen the magnificent equipage for themselves, and Mrs. Horrip had not forgotten to rub it into their memories at every available opportunity since. That this Mr. Fayle was one of *the* Fayles she did not doubt, but . . . there was something fishy about it. And he was always so careful about his correspondence. All his secrets were locked up in his trunk, and he never left a key behind.

And those young lady friends of his: what was their little game? Darning his socks indeed! Mrs. Horrip could not say but that they were nice enough and pleasant enough, but . . . it seemed funny, that was all. Mrs. Horrip wasn't a prude, oh, no; and it wasn't for her to say anything, but she just *would* like to know what it all meant. Ernest wished she wouldn't sniff.

The prospect of his ever obtaining a job began to appear hopeless. Every day he wrote a score of letters, stating full particulars of his age, education, and ardent desire to fling himself without reserve into the service of each advertiser; but nobody seemed at all anxious to snap him up. The monotony of those details about himself began to

wear down his scruples, and by way of diversion he got to adding ambiguous tit-bits of bait. He had had considerable experience of double-entry bookkeeping. He was well up in the Manchester home-trade. Traveling in chemicals was one of his strong features. Life assurance had a powerful fascination for him, and a brief trial would speedily prove his accomplishments as an inspector of agents. To be in charge of a gas-engine show-room was his sole aim and ambition—a five minutes' interview would suffice to remove all doubts as to his knowledge of gas-engines. He had made an exhaustive study of dried fruits and was able to grade Malaga raisins at a glance. If there was one line he really *could* sell it was plumber's accessories. He knew all about cotton waste from start to finish.

In time he even ran as high as a hundred and twenty a minute at shorthand, cautiously adding that it was not one of the recognized methods.

"I don't say I can read it afterwards," he told a stuffed linnet under a glass case.

He grew accustomed to being interviewed, and learned how to skate over thin ice; adapted himself adroitly to the peculiarities of each prospective employer; cunningly wielded a four-flush bluff on occasion—"he had only looked in so as not to disappoint, but he had already half-promised, only half an hour ago, to take on another job . . ."—and he became inured to all the heart-ache of the chronic job-seeker.

His manner was impressive enough, and, in many cases, his qualifications were ample, but there was always that recurrent obstacle of a "previous experience." Managers fought shy of engaging a man of twenty-eight years of age with a prepossessing air who admitted to having no testimonials regarding previous experience and who was willing to accept whatever salary was offered. They preferred playing for safety.

So low did his finances run that he had to ponder carefully about the necessary pence for a lunch. Towards one o'clock, after rushing hopefully to town for an appointment and hanging about corridors and landings, sometimes for hours, in company with scores of others, all after the same job, he always began to feel ravenous.

From steak and chips, and bitter beer in a tankard, he fell to porridge and milk at Smallman's vegetarian restaurant. The cost was threepence.

After a time even threepence seemed extravagant, so he went across to Lockhart's and obtained almost the same thing for twopence. Sometimes, after a frugal breakfast of bread and margarine and weak tea, he felt hunger-pangs towards eleven o'clock, and he would spend twopence on a glass of mild ale at Harry Liston's bar where one could help oneself to an appetizing free lunch of potato-pie, or stew, without extra cost. Most of the public-houses at that time threw in a free lunch between the hours of eleven and twelve, and each strove to become famous for a particular dish.

Ernest learned that the Town Hall Tavern supplied a wonderful pea-soup seasoned with sage, thyme, and marjoram, every Tuesday and Friday—a pea-soup that the Queen's itself could not better even under the name of Crême St. Germain; the Thatched Cottage regaled its customers every Wednesday with steak-and-kidney pudding, while in Willoughby's wine cellar a savory platter of molten cheese was to be had any day of the week—with fingers of crisp golden toast alongside, waiting to be smothered with the fascinating stuff.

And for threepence one could have a mouth-watering dream of delight at Darbishire's, on a glass of rich milk and a hot Eccles-cake that was made on a hundred-year-old recipe and was famed throughout four counties.

His weekly rent became a matter of deep concern. He hardened in his dealings with pawnbrokers.

One suit remained, and Ernest managed to keep the creases in his trousers.

And he never wore the same collar twice.

Life resolved itself into a race of petty economies against time.

Ernest Fayle—out of work!

V

During the summer Anne spent many of the evenings and Saturdays playing tennis at Withington with Molly and Ronny Waddington and their friends.

Ronny always escorted her to the tram afterwards, and tried to summon up courage to say something deep. But somehow he could never bring himself to the point.

Together they were like brother and sister.

Alone, Ronny writhed.

Anne. *Anne.* ANNE.

ANNE.

He made up his mind to write her a long, deep soul-stirring letter.

He tried "My dear Anne." Too patronizing.

"Anne dear"—Umph . . . not quite enough.

"Dearest Anne" . . . Oh, glory!

"Anne." . . . Hang it!

He tore up many false starts and gnawed at despair.

"But next time she comes up. Just wait till I see her alone. Just wait . . . that's all."

He pulled his waistcoat down by the lower points and pictured himself saying clever things to Anne, forcing her by sheer eye-power into the summer-house at the end of the garden, pouring out a torrent of sparkling epigrams—like fellows in books and in plays—taking her hand firmly in his, electrifying her with a wondrous appeal that he couldn't put into words at the moment but which would come rushing out like one o'clock once he got properly started, and he saw himself with Anne trembling in his arms, fluttering, yielding . . . his. Ah!

And when they did meet again they simply bickered over lost balls and argued over scores, just as he and Molly did.

He screwed himself up one Saturday afternoon to: "I say, Anne, you do look ripping," and he made a wild grab at her hand. Then he lost his nerve, went very red, laughed with feeble inanity and let her hand go again.

And Anne looked at him so peculiarly that he thought it best to turn it into a joke, so he added: "What ho!" and felt withered up.

Ronny perspired and cursed himself inwardly.

A pretty girl does not reach the age of twenty-four—be she ever so innocent and clean-minded—without acquiring something in the way of judgment about the other sex. Sex intuitions light up her wits to a more or less

shrewd analysis of a man's attitude towards her. Burgeoning womanhood is not averse to a certain eye-service and the usual little flattering attentions.

Anne was well accustomed to those inspiring homages. Yet, when Ronny made that grab at her hand she was strangely astonished. They had known each other so well as children, and until now sex consciousness had not obtruded on their easy, familiar, brother-and-sister-like relationship.

She was genuinely taken aback and not a little confused.

Mysterious emotional influences seemed to be working within her and about; circling round and round. The strange alchemies of youth acted and reacted on Anne's heart and worked wondrously, played on sense, struck unusual chords and awoke far-echoing harmonies. Reason became distressingly intertwined with impulse—startled her, frightened her, stupefied, thrilled and pleased. She treated Ronny to suddenly inspired, petty, stinging deliberate cruelties—and felt ashamed and sorry immediately after. She gave way to unaccountable promptings that made her do kind things, foolish things, unforgivable things; and then scourged herself furiously for giving way to fancy. Her capriciousness was constantly surprising herself.

Ronny suffered patiently and gladly, as young men do suffer.

Those walks to the tram together were looked-forward-to events. Ronny had faith that miracles would happen, that he would say bright poignant things, that some magic afflatus would descend from heaven and quicken his words to ultra-stellar meanings. But they were always disappointing—those walks—marked only by awkward silences and artificial inanities, staccato beginnings that stopped short . . .

He would start off with:

"Well . . . summer'll soon be over. No tennis or anything. Winter's pretty rotten I always think, don't you?"

"Oh—I don't know. There are compensations."

"I know . . . dances and . . . all that. But winter's not like summer. I mean . . . it's different. You know

what I mean. I suppose you'll be coming up to see us, though."

"I expect so. Why not?"

"Oh, rather!"

A nasty, uncomfortable hiatus.

Then Anne would rattle on about something that didn't matter at all, to relieve the tension.

Then, the waiting for the tram at the White Lion—fidgety, heavy, oppressive moments.

"Well—you'll be up on Saturday?"

"Of course . . . rather! Molly knows I'm coming up. You'll be at home."

"I should say so."

Ronny would light a cigarette—just to be doing something.

A strained silence.

Ronny would look up at the White Lion clock.

"I say, pretty thick, this. Ten o'clock. Not a blessed car in sight and we've been here eight minutes."

Anne, knowing it to be silly, and at the same time unable to suppress it: "Sorry you're bored. You needn't bother to wait." Maddening! *Why* had she said that? She added mentally: "What a donkey I am!"

"I say, that's a bit thick. I didn't mean it that way—really. [Brightly snatching at opportunity.] Y'know, Anne [gulping her name], I like being with you. It's so . . . I mean you're not . . . some girls are such . . . You're *not* like that. I suppose that's why I like you. [Heavily sentimental this.] Y'know I've always liked you, Anne. [A gasp.] I . . . I . . . [lamely] I'm awfully glad you've started coming up to see us again. [Bitterly.] But I suppose you have lots of new friends since we left Ardwick?" [Winding up with a short laugh intended to be cynical.]

As the moment approached when he would have the privilege of touching her hand and soft arm, under pretense of helping her on the tram, Ronny fevered up into a dithering state of self-conscious imbecility. And how delightfully cool and self-possessed she looked in her little white frock!

Those pregnant seconds!

Whatever he did, or did not, seemed wrong. Uneasy

Ronny—a damp-pored welter of error—pink, healthy, white-flanneled, nerve-racked—trying to carry the business off with an assumption of jollity, and anxious for Anne to think him pale and broken-hearted—almost broken, anyway.

That electric touch of her little hand!

"So long, Anne. See you Saturday. Come early."

"Good-night, Ronny. Thank you ever so for bringing me to the tram. Yes—Saturday. Tell Molly I'll be up about two. Bye-bye!"

"Well—bye-bye! Don't forget—two sharp. Righto! Bye-bye."

The wonderful sight of her sitting there in the dimly lit tram, and the idea of that tram-guard's being able to look at her all the way to Brunswick Street. Torturing thought!

Then the avalanche of ideas and emotions as he walked back home. The sweet scents of lush summer night. The calm, soft motherly feel of it, caressing, comforting. Leaves, rich green, trembling above the occasional gas-lamps. Moths fluttering against the glass.

Contentment. Unrest. Peace. War. Hope. Despair.

Youth, strong virile youth, clean-blooded, finely-tempered, sex-snared, caught up by the eternal mysteries; inwardly calling—calling, outwardly dumb: white-trousered Ronny, grappling with profound verities, inhaling deeply from a Virginia cigarette, projecting mental heroics into Saturday next and flattering himself on the proud possession of a bashed and battered heart.

"Anne! Ah!"

VI

Meanwhile, going home in the tram, Anne was accusing herself for devoting so much time to tennis. And she was neglecting Ernest! She felt she must stand staunchly by Ernest. It was her duty—after the mess he had got himself into for her sake. Poor Ernest!

She told herself that Ronny was a very silly boy, and she wouldn't think about him. She would treat him as before . . . before he grabbed her hand. She was very firm with herself about Ronny. All the way home she told

herself she wasn't thinking about him, nor *would* she think about him. And she was astonished that Ronny should think of her *in that way.* And she mustn't encourage *that sort of thing.*

"Men are all the same." And, seriously, she added: "Some more than others."

Then, immediately, she saw the silliness of the amendment and the dimples leapt into play. She suddenly realized the conductor was staring hard and she gave him a sharp frown. He turned his eyes away quickly, seized the fare-box—a clumsy metal thing—and approached her with a warning rattle of coins. "Fares, please!"

She dropped her threepence into the box. The man nodded acknowledgment, respectfully enough, but there was something more than just admiration in his eyes. For the first time, Anne was conscious of a sinister lurking something—something of men that, as her mother would say, was *not nice,* in fact *horrid.*

A tightly-packed period, that ripening into consciousness of full womanhood: life calling, youth urging. Glorious, widening horizons, infinite promise of adventure, beckonings not to be denied, but on the soft breeze a faintly heard warning—like a sigh.

VII

Ernest found it necessary to economize in stamps and tram-fares. He walked into the city, deposited his application letters in the boxes at the journal offices himself, and walked back to his lodgings. He haunted the reading-room at the Longsight free library with a notebook and pencil to copy out advertisements from the papers, furtively at first—as though pretending to be engrossed in the news-columns, turning quickly to the "Wanteds" as soon as he found himself unobserved—and, in course of time, openly, without any pretense; many other seedy-looking men were at the same game, so what did it matter? He saved the cost of newspapers.

But certain extravagances he could not bring himself to cut out. For instance, there was the daily warm bath, for which Mrs. Horrip charged fourpence; then smokes—he simply could not do without an occasional cigar—a

pipe was too dirty, cigarettes were unsatisfactory, and the lowest-priced cigar with which he could bring himself to make shift was a certain sixpenny Havana sold by a tobacconist in Stockport Road; and linen—laundry bills were a great worry.

Sometimes, after a busy half-hour's copying out of the advertisements at the library, he felt too weary to carry on the sickening quest. The close, stuffy, breath-laden atmosphere drugged his energy; the sight of so many other poor devils worse off than himself, nosing round the newspapers, only increased his wretchedness and drove him in despair to seek solace in *Punch* and the *Illustrated London News.*

The long tramps to the city and back, under the hot summer sun, sapped his spirits and dragged heavily on his courage. The dip between Ardwick Green and London Road Railway Station nauseated him immeasurably—advertisement hoardings with paper peeling off; the inky, evil-smelling Medlock at the bottom of the dip, with its nightmare vista of brick and mortar squalor, rat-ridden and loathsome; the sweating tram-horses, technically assisted up the inclines by the sorry pull-up nags; and the all-pervading reek of drying dung—bore him down and crushed him, by sheer weight of cumulative ugliness, into abject despondency.

For lunch he made shift with a penny roll of bread, surreptitiously nibbled in the reference library.

He was just about to give the whole thing up and return home when Fortune twitched her lips; whether *for* or *against* he could not at first make out; but he found a job.

It was to sell books, for a large wholesale house, to retailers in the smaller towns around Manchester, and it necessitated the lugging about of two large leather bags full of heavy works by dead authors beyond the reach of copyright complications. The selling of non-copyright books is the last resort of the down-at-heel brethren.

The monetary return was small and depended almost entirely upon results.

With the last lingering flicker of hope Ernest rekindled his enthusiasms, shouldered his yoke, went about in trains and trams and accomplished the impossible.

At the end of the first week he drew ten shillings for

expenses and fifteen shillings for commission—the firm paid traveling expenses, third class, up to ten shillings a week, provided that sales were not less than a certain fixed figure. Ernest just managed the fixed figure.

He told Anne he was now a book traveler, but the sordid details he kept to himself.

His boots began to show signs of travel, and his trousers lost their pristine exactitude of crease.

VIII

Towards the end of the second week of Ernest's adventure in the "dead book" line, he began to perceive the truth of what he had been told by other commercials casually met in trains—that it was impossible to make a steady living at that game. Hundreds were at it, sticking it for one, two, or three weeks, and then chucking it through sheer arm-ache, unable to lug those ponderous relics further. The wholesalers didn't care so long as lack of employment elsewhere insured a sufficient influx of human pack-mules to take the places of those who failed to bear up. A run of three weeks was reckoned as the limit of a book traveler's endurance.

Ernest's second week's sales threatened to turn out less than the first week's. He was half-dozing in a corner of a railway compartment when the chance remarks of two men opposite opened his ears for further intelligence, and set him thinking.

A novel scheme for the disposal of unsaleable dead genius formulated itself in his brain. Overnight he worked it out in detail, elaborating and amplifying until it appeared flawless and practicable.

The next morning, instead of starting off on the enervating dreary round, he approached first the departmental head and then the manager with his proposition; bargained for, and obtained, what he considered fair terms, drew out an agreement, which the manager laughed at and signed, as though it were a huge joke; engaged a beery lounger at a fixed wage of five shillings for the day and a shilling extra for lunch, and set about his newly-planned operations. The lounger's job was to push a packing-case full of cheap books on a handcart, and to

stand by ready to help when wanted. They took the packing-case to Bury by train from Victoria.

Ernest rented a stall and sold books by Dutch auction in the open market-place.

The scheme panned out better than Ernest had anticipated. At the end of the day's work, after paying certain charges and allowing for settlement with the wholesalers, and all minor expenses, he reckoned up a net profit for himself of two pounds fifteen shillings.

"And by the time I get the hang of it," he chuckled to the stuffed linnet under the glass cover, "I shall be able to clear a sure thirty pounds every week. And they told me I could never make a living in the dead-book line!"

He indulged in a sixpenny cigar and settled himself for an hour of tranquillity with a volume of Keats.

All was well with the world and, from the horizon, two tender warm gray eyes smiled a magic lure.

CHAPTER XV

MEANWHILE, at Cringle Elms, an avalanche of troubles was descending on the head of William Fayle, brickmaker and builder.

Day by day his stubborn pride was dragging him nearer and nearer to the abyss of bankruptcy. The luck that had followed him for a lifetime had at last deserted him, leaving him to the unsound resources of his own confused calculations. It had always been his boast that he paid on the nail. He had continued to do so, while liquid assets held out. Unfortunately, other people did not pay him. The building trade had crumbled away. Firms owing him many thousands of pounds went smash and paid sixpence in the pound. William Fayle was forced to pledge first one security and then another in order to pay current expenses.

And day by day the values of his investments dwindled.

Urged by his sons he stretched his credits to the limit. The thousand pounds divided between Luke and John, and which they had carried off to the antipodes, proved to be the hair that turned the scales against the house of Fayle. The sumptuous Cringle Elms had been pledged to the last stick of firewood. There remained only one means of raising ready money—Mrs. Fayle's personal holding of gilt-edged securities and her jewels. Reluctantly she handed them over, although still confident in her husband's ability to effect a speedy restoration of his fortunes.

Old William Fayle, now showing signs of wear, for the first time in his hard life was laid up in bed with a rheumatic chill, and the arranging of a loan on Mrs. Fayle's properties was left to Matthew and Mark. They raised £5,000 in cash from the bank and then became invisible, leaving their father to the mercy of unyielding creditors and ruin.

Mrs. Fayle was waiting in Ernest's sitting-room when he returned from Stalybridge market one October evening.

He drove back with her in the attendant brougham to Cringle Elms.

As they waited for the old lodge-keeper to open the gates, Ernest caught sight of the notice in the light from the carriage-lamps:

TO BE SOLD BY AUCTION.

And later, as he stood by his father's bed, for the first time he saw humility on that hard, rough, brutish face. A single tear trickled down the old brickmaker's cheek and lost itself in the under-fringe of whiskers.

It was a broken old man who greeted his one remaining son. Mr. Fayle made a pitiable attempt at a laugh and broke into trembling Lancashire accents.

"Sit down, lad, sit thee down." He found Ernest's hand and held it tight, making a heroic attempt at humor —the unconscious joke that had never failed to convulse the schoolboy Ernest. "Tha's lookin' gradely, lad; but ah'm feelin' like a fish out o' order mysen."

The old brickmaker laughed with a painfully labored pretense of heartiness, and a second tear followed its precursor into the tangled growth of hair under his chin.

Ernest tried to join in the laugh, but could not; all the mured-up, willful misunderstandings of a lifetime were dissolved and swept away in a new-sprung stream of pity.

He bent down and, for the first time since early childhood, kissed his father on the forehead.

William Fayle—bankrupt!

CHAPTER XVI

I

OLD Dr. Beamish passed peacefully away during sleep one night in October, and three days later his remains were buried in Ardwick Cemetery in his sister's grave. There were no relations to follow him on his last journey, but the long procession of walking mourners and the crowded congregation for the service at the cemetery chapel testified to the affection in which his memory was held by all who had known him.

After hearing the will read over in the doctor's study by the solicitor, Mr. Tarling of King Street, the two trustees walked slowly together to the workshop in Back Coldacre.

The death of their old friend linked the brothers-in-law in a mutual longing for each other's company that did not require words to express itself. Each knew the other's emotion, and their silences were eloquent.

Scarcely had they settled themselves in the workshop, to discuss the mysterious details of the departed doctor's strange will, than a knocking at the door occurred.

A short, clean-shaven man, wearing a long ulster and a soft trilby hat, was standing outside, desirous of a few minutes' conversation with Mr. Unwin.

"My name," he said, "is Wickstead."

The inventor invited him to step inside and offered him a chair, adding: "This gentleman is my brother-in-law, Mr. Whittaker, who knows most of my little secrets. You may speak freely, Mr. Wickstead."

"My business'll not take more than five minutes," the stranger began, playing with the ribbon of his hat. "I understand, Mr. Unwin, that you are at present engaged on a new type of mule for cotton-spinning. May I inquire if you have yet disposed of the rights?"

"I cannot do that until the machine is perfected," Mr. Unwin replied.

"I am delighted to hear that," Mr. Wickstead went on. "Now, I am instructed by certain interested parties to make you an offer. The gentlemen I am acting for are so attracted by the rumors that have appeared from time to time in the press about your latest invention that they have empowered me to arrange with you for the first refusal of the world's rights, and I hope we shall be able to agree on terms."

Mr. Unwin pulled at his white mustache.

"I'm very sorry, Mr. Wickstead," he said, "but I have already refused options to several of the best-known firms in the mill-machinery line. I can only repeat what I told them: that invitations will be sent to the trade to witness a demonstration immediately the machine is ready, or as soon after as provisional patent has been secured."

"You are not prepared to consider a handsome price for an option?"

"In fairness to the trade," Mr. Unwin answered, "both my partner and myself are agreed on that point. We prefer to leave all doors open."

Mr. Wickstead coughed.

"Well . . . I suppose it's hopeless then, but, to justify myself to my principals, I might as well state our top figure. We offer you one thousand pounds for a three months' option to purchase."

The inventor was just about to make an impatient retort when Mr. Whittaker spoke:

"One minute, Arthur. After all this is business, and it's only right that Dr. Logan should have a chance to give his opinion. Perhaps this gentleman will give you the offer in writing and leave the thing open for a few days."

Mr. Unwin agreed to this proposal, and the stranger promised to send a formal statement of the offer.

Mr. Wickstead shook hands and, as he turned to go, he remarked casually: "I suppose the machine will be ready for a demonstration by the new year anyhow?"

"Oh, much before then," Mr. Unwin assured him. "It's only a matter of minor details and polish now."

"And you are confident of success?"

"We have the highest hopes."

Mr. Wickstead again wished them "Good-day" and departed.

That evening the brothers-in-law talked the proposition over with Dr. Logan, and the two collaborators agreed finally to notify the leading machine-making firms that one thousand pounds had been offered for a three months' purchase option on their latest invention—the Logan-Unwin Mule—and that the inventor would not close with the offer until Saturday, the Fifth of November; leaving it open to the trade to make the running until 5 p. m. on that date, when the highest offer would be accepted: payment to be made in ready money, and such payment to be for the option only, apart from the actual price of the patent itself which would be offered outright at the fixed sum of £15,000.

Mr. Unwin allowed himself to be persuaded, but rather against his personal inclination.

"I have never bothered myself about the business side," he observed thoughtfully, rubbing his chin, "and I have always refused to tie myself up with options, but if you two are quite convinced that it's perfectly square and above board . . ."

"It's like this," the doctor explained, relapsing slightly into the Doric, as was his way when deeply concerned. "We have already decided to stick out for fifteen thousand pounds for the thing itself, an' we know that whoever buys it at that price will make a grr-and profit out of it. Why, man, it's only a matter of business to squeeze 'em for a wee bit more while we've got the chance. That's the way we look at things up in Scotland. We don't like to see guid siller goin' a'beggin'. Look at it this way. . . ."

It was left at that.

Letters were duly sent out to the trade, and a *pro forma* copy was also to be sent to Mr. Wickstead, as soon as his promised offer in writing arrived. But Mr. Wickstead's letter did not arrive. The trade, however, responded heartily, and the Fifth of November promised to bring a notable gathering of responsible bidders to the little workshop in Back Coldacre.

"It's very strange we hear nothing from that Wickstead joker," Mr. Unwin put to the doctor.

And Dr. Logan replied: "Why worry? It's brought the trade up to scratch."

II

One night, towards the end of October, Anne, who generally slept with her bedroom window open, was awakened from her dreams by the angry baying of Bruce. It was unusual but understandable—probably one of the cabmen stabling his horse had aroused the dog to this proof of watchfulness in the workshop.

She tried to sleep again, but the demonstration continued and kept her awake. After half an hour of futile tossing about Anne rose and looked from her bedroom window, which commanded the mews—a stone's throw away.

Bright moonlight shone down on a vista of roofs and chimney-pots, and flooded the stableyard. Everything appeared to be in order. The tunnel, at the bottle-necked entrance, in the shadowed background, was faintly illuminated by the crimson glow of the private gas lamp which told the world, in white lettering on the large glass globe, that

Carriage ᔕ ELI GARSIDE ᔕ Proprietor

was in service "Day and Night"; and, at the far left-hand corner of the mews, a gas-lit square of yellow brightness hinted the presence of a cabman on duty in the little office awaiting orders.

Nothing amiss. Only Bruce making night hideous. As Anne watched and wondered, the dog's barking and growling rose to a furious pitch, and she was contemplating running downstairs to waken her father when she saw the figure of a man emerge from the stable next to the workshop.

Evidently one of the Italians, of whom she had heard her father speak as being unfriendly towards Bruce. But what could he be doing there at that hour? Anne heard the click of the key in the lock—faintly.

The figure lost itself in the shadow of Mr. Garside's house. Five minutes later it appeared again in the red

glow at the far end of the short tunnel, and turned to the left down Higher Ardwick.

Anne wondered why the man had taken so much time to walk from the stable to the tunnel—five minutes for only a few yards—and how it was she had not seen him in silhouette against the yellow light of the office window, which he was bound to cross to reach the tunnel.

The dog's anger abated, and the growling gradually became inaudible.

Anne struck a match and looked at the alarm-clock by her bedside. It was 3.17.

She mentioned the strange occurrence to her father next morning.

He laughed it away. "Those Italians! Always up to some dark scheme! They thrive on mysteries. Bruce seems to have taken a violent dislike to the three of them. I fancy they tease him when I'm not about. I found him one day with one of the Moroni brethren pinned to the wall. Eli's pretty down on them too—says they're always behind with their rent. I expect they have a hard struggle trying to make both ends meet. I can't help feeling sorry for the poor wretches. Unless Eli complains of Bruce's barking I shan't say anything to him about last night's affair. After all, they're entitled to go in and out of their stable any time they like; and it's no business of mine anyhow. Pass me the marmalade, Anne."

On the two following nights terrific storms raged, and if Bruce made any noise at all it was drowned in the wrath of the wind and rain, but on the third night, which was moderately calm, the big Newfoundland repeated his performance, much to Anne's annoyance.

The time was 3.30. Anne looked from her window but could see nothing. A light rain was falling and the night was black.

This time the barking and growling lasted only about five minutes, followed by a dismal whining; then silence.

On the fourth and fifth nights the same thing happened, except that the dog's noises died away sooner.

"I think the poor old fellow must be ill," said Mr. Unwin when Anne brought the subject up again at breakfast. "The doctor gave him a pill yesterday, so I expect he'll be all right now. Newfoundlands always want a bit

of looking after when they get past their third year, and even if they're properly handled few die of actual old age. They're all subject to a consumptive tendency; as though nature kicks against their being removed from their native climate. Poor Bruce! He's been off his feed for days; his eyes are dull and his nose is dry. He's already had the distemper, so it can't be that; and there's no inflammation of the mucous membrane. There seems to be something wrong with the joints of his feet, and he's vomited quite a lot." He went on: "Logan thinks he must have picked up some rubbish that's turned his stomach—an old bone or a bit of tainted fish perhaps. But you can trust a dog to cure himself. He's drinking enormously and he sleeps nearly all day. I suppose he wakes up in the middle of the night and puts in a bit of vocal exercise to kill time."

But when Mr. Unwin let himself into the workshop on the Saturday morning—the Fifth of November—poor Bruce was lying on the wooden floor of the laboratory office, stiff and cold—dead.

Mr. Garside and a stableman helped the inventor to lift the dog's body over the wall, and Bruce was buried at the end of the Unwin garden in the shadow of the workshop he had so faithfully guarded during his lifetime.

Little George Washington assisted at the burial of his old friend. Between these two dumb creatures an extraordinary friendship had existed. Tears streamed down George Washington's cheeks: his grief was great.

Anne took the poor urchin in her arms, wiped his wet face with her handkerchief and then took him indoors to stuff him with a breakfast he obviously had difficulty in eating. All the time he kept turning to look through the kitchen window at Mr. Unwin who was filling-in the grave at the end of the garden.

After seeing to his inner needs Anne spent a strenuous half-hour with Master George Washington in the bathroom. His back was covered with red wales. Evidently he had been severely beaten. Anne shuddered. When he was groomed to her satisfaction she carried him off on a secret mission, first to the Penny Bank and then to the Co-operative Stores in Downing Street.

When they returned later in the morning the metamorphosis of George Washington was startling. Instead of a

comic scarecrow, one saw a clean, not unprepossessing little boy in a brand-new sailor suit, with wistful blue eyes that lit up with a most fascinating pathetic smile when Mrs. Unwin and Alice asked him to what ship he belonged. For answer he took off his little round cap and pointed to the name in gold letters on the front: H.M.S. *Excelsior.*

Anne then walked her transformed charge round to the workshop and made him show off his new outfit to her father. She addressed her parent firmly:

"Daddy, we're just going to look after this young gentleman ourselves from now. There are plenty of spare rooms and beds that we never use, and young George is going to be our lodger: and if he *can* be cured he's going to *be* cured."

And before dinner-time, the three of them—George leading the way—had visited a loathsome hovel in the thick of the Ancoats slums, had interviewed an aged hag who professed to be George's grandmother, and had arranged that George's father should present himself to Mr. Unwin at the workshop as soon as he (George's father) could be located amongst the many public-houses of the quarter, to discuss the proposed temporary, if not permanent, adoption of George by the Unwins.

"'E'll give ye a look-up, mister," the old hag had assured them, "but I dunno as 'e'll take kindly to lettin' ye 'ave the lad. Our 'Erb's mortal fond of 'im, to say nothink of the money 'e can earn. An' I warn ye to look out if our 'Erb's 'ad a drop o' drink—as 'e mostwise 'as of a Sat'day. A reg'lar caution our 'Erb is, an' a fair devil when 'e's roused—as 'e mostwise is. 'E's just done 'is six months' 'ard for 'ittin' a barman on the 'ead with a beer bottle as answered 'im back like; but six months isn't agoin' to frighten our 'Erb onst 'e's real roused. So I warn ye to look out, mister."

And George Washington's real name was "same as our 'Erb"—Herbert Neath.

"But," said Anne, as they breathed the comparatively pure air of Chancery Lane on the return walk, "I think we'll stick to the old name. 'George Washington' has a clean, healthy sound about it, and it'll be something to try and live up to."

CHAPTER XVII

I

FROM the wreckage of the Fayle fortunes Ernest managed to salve his personal belongings—his wardrobe, books, pictures, miscellaneous curios and antiques, the dogcart and Billie Boy—and by private treaty he disposed of most, realizing something over £800.

The parting with Billie Boy was the hardest to bear. A thin-lipped horse dealer led the magnificent roan away into the unknown, and Ernest sighed with keen regrets.

Before Cringle Elms actually went under the hammer he arranged with his landlady to have her house redecorated throughout, himself choosing the wall-paper, and when he brought his parents to share his lodgings in Kirkmanshulme Lane the place looked clean and tolerably cheerful.

After the lavish comforts of Cringle Elms Mrs. Fayle was not unnaturally jarred, but she made the best of a bad bargain and joined Ernest in his efforts to inspire old Mr. Fayle with interests other than the Psalms.

The brickmaker brooded, the picture of abject melancholy, in slippered feet, wearing an old velvet jacket and a little satin smoking cap, reading from a large-type Bible by the sitting-room fire; and nothing could make him smile. He gave up smoking and vowed never again to touch alcohol. Whenever he swore, and by sheer force of habit he not infrequently did, he apologized humbly. He appeared to be giving himself over to a life of self-denial and religious devotion. He developed the disconcerting *tic* of face-twitching when thinking deeply; and he often thought aloud. His thoughts seemed strangely interwoven with business and religion.

One of his unconscious outbursts was: "Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it. And how can a man compete with these here jerry-builders that never pay for the bricks they use? Except the Lord keep the city the watchman waketh but in vain—five thou-

sand pound they done me for, them two—for the Lord is my shepherd I shall not want."

Mrs. Fayle put a warning finger on her lips. Ernest understood and nodded.

Every evening the old brickmaker would wander off by himself, and would return about eleven o'clock looking weary of mind and body.

One night, Ernest followed his father, at Mrs. Fayle's request.

The explanation of those nocturnal rambles was simple and sad; the old man had walked round by Belle Vue to the "Wilderness"—the scene of his early beginnings—and had spent several hours striding out distances, as though measuring up and calculating the clay possibilities and the resultant brick output.

"We shall soon be on our feet again," Ernest assured his mother; "with the little bit of ready money I have in hand I shall be able to start in properly. I'm going to take a stall in the covered market at Bury and put somebody in charge. I've already come to an arrangement with the wholesalers, and if the scheme proves feasible, as it promises to do, we'll lie low here for a month or two until I get a few more branches going nicely, and then we'll move into a decent house and live like Christians again."

Anne and Polly continued to call, and Mrs. Fayle, after her suspicions were dissipated, and her barriers of maternal jealousy broken down, began to look forward eagerly to their visits.

On the evening of the Fifth of November Anne called alone, having groped her way along the dimly-lit Kirkmanshulme Lane through the thick fog that is not at all unusual in Manchester on Guy Fawkes' night.

Ernest was in bed, and had been all day with what Mrs. Fayle thought must be a severe chill. He had been kept awake for several nights by the noise of trains, and during the early mornings by the banging of milk-cans on the platform of Longsight station just opposite.

"You'd better come up and see him," said Mrs. Fayle, leading the way to the bedrooms. "Perhaps you can persuade him to have a doctor. He gets so cross when I suggest it."

Ernest was awake. He smiled feebly as Anne entered the room.

"Hullo, Anne. Isn't this all a lot of nonsense? Just because the little breadwinner has a bit of a headache his mother packs him off to bed with a pink shawl and a warming-pan."

Anne became very nurse-like and severe, felt his pulse, lit a taper and examined his throat, and decided that he was feverish.

"I don't care what *he* says," Anne declared, "I'm just going to send our doctor up at once."

Ernest made a painful attempt at a comical grimace.

"There!" said Mrs. Fayle with her French shrug of the shoulders, "you see what a silly boy he is."

"Please let me alone," Ernest pleaded. "A doctor would only laugh. I shall be all right by to-morrow, you'll see."

Anne glanced at her watch.

"It's just eight o'clock. I'll take the tram to Ardwick Green. If Dr. Logan's at liberty I'll bring him back with me immediately. He's generally free about this time, so with luck he ought to be here within an hour."

II

The fog had become denser outside, and it was not until twenty-five minutes to nine that Anne rang Dr. Logan's bell.

"Tell the doctor Miss Unwin wants to see him," Anne ordered the maid, "and say it's urgent."

"I'm a bit late to-night," said Dr. Logan as Anne was admitted into the surgery. "But I shall be finished with that lot in the waiting-room in about ten minutes. I suppose your father wants me to step round?"

"No, it isn't that this time. I want you to rush up to Longsight as quickly as the tram can take you. It's useless to take your carriage in this fog."

"Accident?"

"No. But I fancy it's fever. Anyhow, it's most important. If you can come along at once I'll wait and show you the way."

"Well, I must see these few patients first. They've

been waiting a long time for me as it is. Your father asked me to call at the workshop about half-past eight to give a piece of my mind, and a wee bit of medical jargon for makeweight, to George Washington's father about those wales on the laddie's poor wee body; but when I got there the place was locked up and the lights out. I had no time to call in at the house on account of the patients here. It's thrown me later than ever. But if you'll leave the address I'll be up there as soon as I can get finished."

Anne was tapping an impatient little foot on the linoleum.

"In that case I'll not wait for you," she said, frowning down his talkativeness. "I'll dash along to Uncle John's shop for some eau-de-Cologne and smelling salts. This is the address."

Dr. Logan took up his pen. Anne noticed that his cuffs were badly stained with blood. "For a doctor he's careless about his appearance," she thought.

"Lynwood," she dictated, "Clifton Terrace, Kirkmanshulme Lane. It's the second house in that terrace with the carriage drive, on the right—just opposite the Longsight station. It's not easy to find in the fog."

"I'll get there," Dr. Logan said with a self-confident laugh that irritated Anne beyond reason.

He looked up at her.

"And the name?"

"Fayle."

He made a wry smile and muttered: "That's funny!"

"What's funny?" Anne asked indignantly.

"Oh—nothing—I mean the name Fayle. No relation to the building people, I suppose?"

"Yes—the youngest son—Ernest—Ernest Fayle."

The doctor's eyes opened wide. The pen dropped from his hand and rolled off the table. He stooped to retrieve it, and when he sat up again his face was flushed.

"All right, Miss Unwin. I'll be there presently."

"And please do everything you possibly can," Anne requested.

"You seem very concerned about him."

"I am." And she added, as though defiantly and for

no accountable reason: "I'm going to marry him—some day."

When Anne had closed the door behind her Dr. Logan stared at the name he had written down.

"Good God!" he ejaculated.

And then: "A Fayle! And she's going to marry him!"

He pulled himself together and rang the hand-bell. The maid ushered in the next patient.

III

Anne found every tram packed, so she decided to walk the few hundred yards up Stockport Road to her uncle's shop. Even there she had to wait her turn to be served. Impatient at the delay she went behind the counter, into the dispensing laboratory at the back of the shop, where Polly was helping Mr. Whittaker with the prescriptions—a not unusual service during the rush hours of Saturday night.

Of course Polly was inquisitive, demanding all the details about Ernest's illness, and Bruce's death, and if Mr. Unwin had been successful about the new machine—how much had he received for the option, and did the thing work properly?—and hadn't Anne better take some ammoniated tincture of quinine for Ernest?

By the time Anne arrived back at the Fayles' lodgings in Kirkmanshulme Lane, Dr. Logan had already examined Ernest.

"You were quite right, Miss Unwin," the doctor told her, as he buttoned up his great coat. "It's fever right enough—vomiting, strawberry tongue, sore throat, rising temperature—scarlet fever, I believe, but I shall know definitely by to-morrow morning. His temperature's a hundred and three and he's getting delirious. Mrs. Fayle here knows exactly what to do, and you needn't bother about the medicine; I'll send my boy along with everything the minute I get back. The patient's bound to have a bad night, and he ought to be watched. His mother and father are going to take turns. The worst time will be just before the dawn—that's the crucial moment. I'll be here exactly at five o'clock."

Anne regarded the doctor appreciatively.

"That's unusual, isn't it—I mean for you to visit at that time?"

"Yes, but it's a very unusual case."

"Then there really is danger?"

"Aye—there's danger, but ye needn't worry till five o'clock, and I'll be here then."

Anne came to a quick decision.

"I'm going to stay here and watch," she declared.

Mrs. Fayle, who was coming downstairs at that moment, heard her and protested: "But you can't do that, Anne dear. You mustn't miss your sleep. Father and I will be able to take turns. He'll be in presently, and I'm sure he won't like you to be here with the risk of catching fever."

Anne deliberately removed her cloak and hat.

"I'm going to stay," she repeated firmly.

Dr. Logan smiled his wry smile.

"I thought ye would," he said. "But I warn you—it's dangerous."

"I'm not afraid," Anne retorted, "and, besides, I have already had scarlet fever and measles."

The doctor went out into the fog.

IV

That Fifth of November was a day after Mr. Eli Garside's own heart, and many entries were made in his book of clews.

All the afternoon he had sat on his favorite perch, the refuse box at the far end of the stableyard, chewing his cigar-stump. Over tea he summed up the evidences of mystery:

1. The strange nocturnal barkings of Mr. Unwin's dog during the last few nights; always at the same time—about 3.15 a. m.

2. The death of Bruce and the undisguised joy of the Italian who had sworn the vendetta against Mr. Unwin.

3. The coming and going of many men—over a dozen—to and from Mr. Unwin's workshop during the afternoon.

4. The strange appearance of George Washington in respectable garments.

5. The hanging-about of two evil-looking hooligans from five o'clock until six. Their accosting Mr. Unwin, as he left the workshop at six o'clock with two gentlemen in bowler hats and smart overcoats, and Mr. Unwin's telling the hooligans: "I can't see you now. Call again at half-past eight."

Clews!

Mr. Garside propped up his penny dreadful against the sugar-basin and tried to inspire himself with Maxim Dane's latest exploit: "The Tracking of the Masked Raiders."

He was just half-way through the first chapter when a hubbub arose in the stableyard and drew him outside to inquire into the cause.

Through the fog that was just beginning to gather, Eli could see nothing, but a loud interchange of highly-colored challenges at the end of the yard indicated that dirty work was afoot and riveted Eli's attention. He seized a mop and made his way stealthily in the direction of the brawl.

One of the aforementioned hooligans was hammering at the workshop door with half a brick, and complaining in a loud voice that a certain decorated swine had kidnaped his shattered offspring, and that he was going to have his (unrepeatable) rights even if he had to ruddy well swing for them. A cabman and a groom were standing at a relatively safe distance, informing the hooligan of what they conjectured would be his undesirable fate if he didn't immediately take himself elsewhere.

At the appearance of Eli, the hooligan doubled his attack on the unyielding door, and voiced his views still more stentoriously.

"Stealin' the very bread out of my [so-and-so] mouth—the [scarlet] swine! I'll rip his [unclean] guts out and make 'im eat 'em—the dirty reptile! I'll kick his kidneys out—I'll . . ."

Encouraged by the boss's presence the cabman and groom went through the customary preliminaries—loud swearing, half-removing their jackets and slowly adjusting them back to the normal, finger pointing, threatening and temporizing. The hooligan finessed in the approved

manner stamped by long usage in such affairs, and the thing looked like ending in empty words when, suddenly, a female form in the person of Mrs. Garside, rushed in and emptied a bucket of water over the loud-mouthed ruffian.

Eli and his two underlings, taking advantage of the occasion, and worked up to the highest pitch of daring under the gaze of the female of the species, closed with the hooligan and, after rolling with him all over the damp cobbles of the mews, finally succeeded in knocking the remaining fight out of him and heaved him into the gutter of Higher Ardwick.

Under the red glow of the mews' gas lamp, Eli shook a portentous fist at the discomfited ruffian and predicted unpleasant happenings if ever he (the ruffian) set his foot in the neighborhood of the stables again.

Mr. Garside rewarded his underlings with the price of a drink each and returned to his tea.

Mrs. Garside continued her interrupted operations in her back scullery without comment.

When Eli returned to the yard after tea, he found the workshop lit-up, and through the keyhole he could hear the voices of Mr. Unwin and two others, and also the chinking of coins.

Mr. Garside went back to his office and tried the ring of several of his own coins—copper, silver, and gold—and then he wrote in his clew-book: *"Gold coins herd changing hands at seven-fifteen p. m. in the evening."*

Later, he found the little door of the workshop wide open, and inside he saw Mr. Unwin at the desk and Mrs. Radcliffe scrubbing the office floor. Eli knocked. The inventor bade him enter.

"Oh—it's you, Eli. I thought it was some one I'm waiting for. Come in, but don't step on where Mrs. Radcliffe has cleaned or there'll be fireworks inside as well as out."

The banging of crackers and the shrieking of rockets could be heard from the direction of the croft beyond Apsley House, where the effigy of the Jacobean conspirator was being at that moment relegated to the flames of a huge bonfire in accordance with ancient custom.

"I've come to warn yer, sir," said Eli, as he stepped inside. His eyes were bulging with excitement and his hat was at an unusually rakish angle.

"There's bin a nattempted burglary," he went on, "an' I shouldn't be surprised if before the night's out I 'ad to use *this*." He put his hand to his hip pocket and produced a theatrical-looking pistol.

Mr. Unwin laughed and said: "Oh, I've got a much more business-like weapon than that, Eli." He opened a drawer in his desk and showed Mr. Garside a six-chambered revolver.

Eli gasped with delight. *A revolver!* And on the desk was a pile of bank-notes, and a heap of sovereigns.

"Mr. Whittaker left me the thing this afternoon," Mr. Unwin explained. "He knew I was likely to be receiving a rather large sum of money to-night and he thought I ought to have some sort of protection at hand, as poor old Bruce has gone." Mr. Unwin laughed and added: "It's the precaution a schoolboy would take great delight in." He put the weapon under the blotting-pad, and on top of the notes and gold he placed a stone paperweight.

"Now tell me about the burglary, Eli."

Eli did so, dwelling largely on his own share in the recent affair, and adding one or two artistic touches that even Maxim Dane himself might have applauded.

Mrs. Radcliffe was visibly impressed and Eli puffed himself.

"Nobody 'ud think he ever had it in him to tackle a man like that—single-handed as one might say," the charwoman commented to Mr. Unwin as she toyed with her scrubbing-brush.

"Oh, we have to take risks now and then," said Eli modestly. "For me own part there's nothink as I like better'n a good old scrap."

Mr. Unwin seemed preoccupied and not sufficiently impressed to please Eli, and when Mrs. Radcliffe had finished her cleaning he went out with her, still recalling lurid details of his adventure and enlarging on them as he went along.

"I'm just goin' to stroll around to the Red Bull," he

remarked casually to his listener as they reached the exit of the mews. "An' if so be as you feel like 'avin' a mouthful, missus, I don't say as I won't buy one for you."

Mrs. Radcliffe confessed that Eli had read her inmost thoughts, and the pair strolled away towards the railway arches of Chancery Lane—the direction of the Red Bull.

Mrs. Radcliffe, Mr. Garside thought, was a very sensible woman. He had never before had such an intelligent listener, and he therefore let his fancy have full rein. They found many likes and dislikes that they both had in common; a profound mutual admiration developed, and Mr. Garside spent more money on his new friend than he had at first intended. The alacrity with which Mrs. Radcliffe got rid of her gin was rather disturbing to the cautious carriage proprietor, and when she finally—after half a dozen gins at his expense—took it upon herself to order "two large ones," leaving him to pay, he decided that admiration was outrunning his acumen, and he made a tactical exit on the excuse that there was nobody in charge of the office.

Limelight is expensive.

As Mr. Garside re-entered the stableyard one of his own cabmen drove in, and in the fog Eli only just missed being run over. The two were in the act of exchanging opinions of each other when a sudden loud report came from the end of the yard.

Eli checked his outpouring and held up a warning finger.

"What was that?"

"Twopenny cracker, it sounded like."

"But it was 'ere in the yard!"

They went to investigate.

As they approached they heard the little door of the workshop being roughly banged open.

Mr. Garside shouted: "Who's that?"

A voice cried: "Here—this way—over the wall."

Eli and the cabman rushed forward, but before they reached the wall the man who had called out, and, presumably, his companion, had disappeared over the top. Two distinct thuds were heard—as of bodies dropping on to soft soil the other side of the wall.

In the feeble light that flickered through the open door of the workshop Eli stopped and looked uneasily at the cabman.

"That's rum," he whispered. "Damn rum, if you ask me."

The cabman put his head through the door and peered inside.

"There's only a candle lit—you can't see nothing."

Eli rapped on the door with his knuckles. There was no answer.

They stepped inside, Eli leading with his pistol in his hand, and went cautiously forward to the office-half of the workshop from whence the candle light shone.

"Light the gas," Eli ordered.

The other did so.

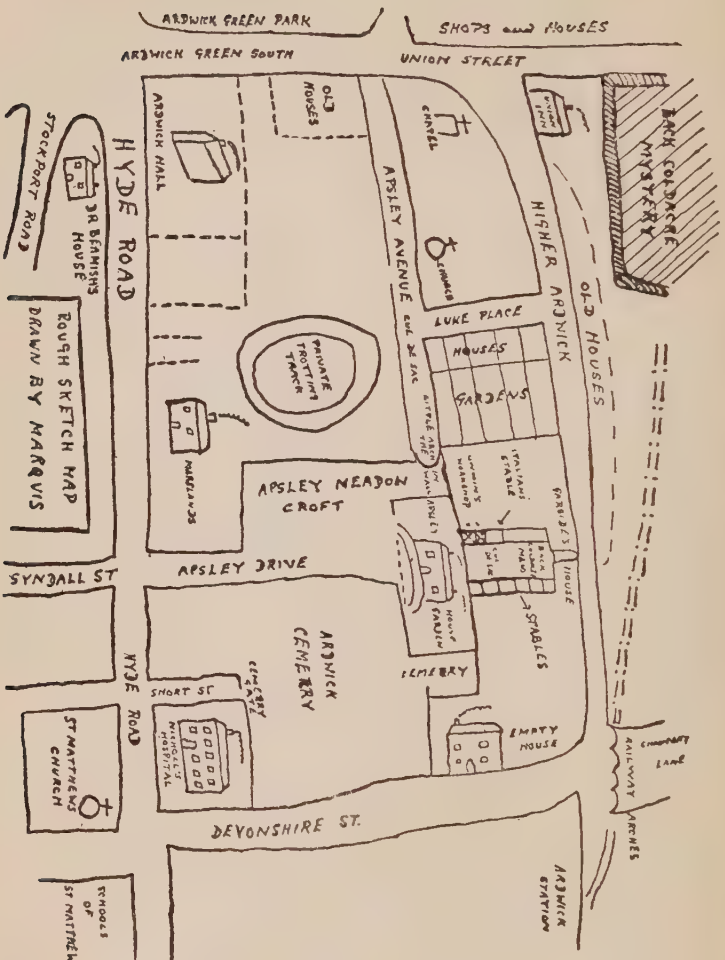
Mr. Garside's pop eyes seemed about to go off with a bang. He pointed a shaking finger to what lay on the floor.

It was the body of Mr. Unwin, face upturned and arms outspread. The waistcoat was open, revealing a white shirt stained with blood.

And on the floor, by the side of the body, were several bank-notes and a scattered array of gold coins.

When Mr. Garside found voice he said thickly: *"Murder!* That's what it is—I warned him only to-night as summat was bound to 'appen . . . *an' by God . . . it 'as!"*

END OF BOOK I


ARDWICK GREEN PARK
ARDWICK GREEN SOUTH
SHOPS and HOUSES
UNION STREET
OLD HOUSES
ARDWICK HALL
CHAPEL
APSLEY AVENUE
HIGHER ARDWICK
OLD HOUSES
BANK COLLIERY MYSTERY
LUKE PLACE
HOUSES
GARDENS
STOCKPORT ROAD
DR BEAMISH'S HOUSE
HYDE ROAD
ROUGH SKETCH MAP DRAWN BY MARQUIS
PRIVATE TROTTING TRACK
PAVILION
APSLEY MEADOW CROFT
APSLEY DRIVE
SYNDALL ST
ARDWICK CEMETERY
SHORT ST
HYDE ROAD
ST MATTHEWS CHURCH
DEVONSHIRE ST.
SCHOOLS OF ST MATTHEW
EMPTY HOUSE
STABLES
RAILWAY ARCHES
ARDWICK STATION

BOOK II

CHAPTER I

I

IT was midnight.

Before a bright fire in the breakfast-room at Apsley House Mr. Whittaker was standing, puffing away at his pipe, and in the big armchair by his side there sat a tall, dark, aristocratic-looking, full-bearded and mustached man of about forty-five years of age, busily engaged with a note-book and pencil.

For a full quarter of an hour neither spoke.

Chief Detective-Superintendent Marquis and Mr. Whittaker had been acquainted for several years.

Mr. Whittaker was hardly yet able to realize that his life-long chum was no more. His brain seemed to deny assimilation of the ghastly tragedy, and ran with capricious perversity into mental gymnastics concerning all manner of minor inconsequentialities—such as calculating the number of times the pattern of the wallpaper repeated itself. He found himself speculating why the superintendent looked less like a detective than anybody he knew. The man might have been mistaken for a lord mayor or the president of a bank. He had all the indications of being a successful professional man with correct tastes; he was gentle-mannered, soberly dressed, well-spoken, quick to understand and equally quick to decide—at the same time easy and smooth—there was nothing of the ponderous ex-policeman about him. There was great power and there was push, but gracefully covered: a tall man, reckoning in feet and inches, and a big man by standards of personality.

Then off went the chemist's thoughts in search of another problem.

There seemed to be something wrong about the breakfast-room itself: something unusual. He glanced around,

hardly conscious of what he was doing and unable to focus his mind for very long on any one point, aimlessly, at the same time mildly aware of the freezing horror lying just outside the portals of his intellect—a horror too great for sudden admittance. He looked down to see the detective's eyes regarding him with curious interest.

"Something wrong about this room?" Marquis queried. "That's what's worrying you, isn't it?"

"You're right. I can't quite make it out. Been here thousands of times, and everything appears to be as it ought to be; and yet . . ." Mr. Whittaker sighed and ran his hand wearily across his forehead. "It's the shock, I suppose. Makes one feel there's something in superstition." His eyes rambled round the room again. "I feel there's something missing. It isn't just poor Arthur. I mean something that ought to be in this room that isn't. I give it up."

As he said the last words Mr. Whittaker took out his watch, looked at it, and then replaced it in his pocket.

"What's the time?" Marquis asked.

Mr. Whittaker blinked foolishly, took out his watch again, looked at it, and answered: "Seventeen past twelve."

The detective said quietly: "Thank you. You've solved the riddle that's had me wondering for the last few minutes. By using your subconscious mind I have found out what my active brain couldn't deduce under pressure. When I asked you the time you had only just glanced at your watch. You had to look at it again before you could answer. Obviously you did not consult your watch the first time for any conscious purpose. The taking of your watch from your pocket was an involuntary act suggested by the deeper intuitions of the subconscious. We were wondering what is missing in this room. I'll tell you what it is. *You* have just told *me*."

The superintendent pointed his pencil to the big grandfather clock in the corner. "That clock has stopped. A clock suggests a tick. That's what's missing from this room. You notice the fingers point to thirty-nine minutes past eight."

"That's it!" cried Mr. Whittaker, suddenly alert. "The old clock has run down."

"Your brother-in-law was a very methodical man, you say—always punctual. It isn't likely he would forget to wind the clock, is it?"

"No. And what's more, he had an extraordinary pride in that clock. Poor Arthur often boasted that it kept better time than the town hall, and that it had not stopped for over twenty years."

The detective tried the clock door. It opened easily.

Mr. Whittaker stared. "That's curious," he observed. "Arthur always insisted on the clock door being locked. The key's always kept in this vase." He took the ornament from the mantelshelf and up-ended it, but the key was not there.

II

The detective lit a taper and peered inside the clock.

"Now let us have a look at the inner workings; you see the position of the counter-weights? . . . almost level. That means that the clock has about half run its course. Do you happen to know on what day your brother-in-law was in the habit of winding the clock?"

"Yes, Tuesday night. I'm certain of that because I always come round for chess on Tuesdays and, as I generally don't go until I'm practically chucked out, Arthur used to go through the clock-winding pantomime as a delicate hint that he wanted to go to bed. It's an eight-day clock and it's been in the family for generations."

Marquis had lit a taper and was examining the ledge below the counter-weights.

"This is interesting," he remarked. "Dust and finger-marks! I'm afraid I must have another word with the servant. Will you ring the bell, Whittaker?"

The asthmatic Alice answered the summons, very agitated and wheezing loudly.

Marquis smiled at her and said with considerate gentleness: "Now, don't be alarmed, I just want you to tell me something more. You have told me about the missing victuals, but I think perhaps other things might also be missing. For instance, keys. Sometimes keys are hidden in peculiar places where burglars are not likely to look,

and, generally speaking, those are the very places where burglars do look. Now is there any special key hidden anywhere in the house?"

"Well, sir," Alice panted, putting a red hand to her heart, "there's only . . . the clock keys . . . they're kept in the clocks . . . mostly. And then there's . . . the key of the workshop . . . the one that missus . . . got master to have made . . . in case of accidents . . . like."

"And where was that kept?"

Alice pointed. "There . . . inside . . . that there clock."

"Thank you." The detective patted her shoulder. "That will do. You can go to bed now, and in the morning don't do any dusting or sweeping until I give permission, and, above all, don't let anybody come into this room. Keep fingers off all windows all over the house. One of my constables will be here all night, and there's another in the mews; so just you pop along and get a good sleep."

"Thank you, sir," wheezed Alice. She went out.

"Now," said Marquis, after making a note in his book, "we'll see if the clock goes properly. Notice the time indicated by the fingers." He touched the pendulum. Immediately the clock restarted its steady tick-tock. He lit the taper again and found the big clock-winding key on the shelf below the weights, but the spare key of the workshop and the little clock-door key were missing. He closed the clock-case and turned once more to his notes.

III

"Listen, Whittaker." Marquis reseated himself and motioned the chemist to the armchair on the opposite side of the fireplace. "You know as much as I do about this ghastly affair—possibly more. You were on the spot before I turned up, and you've been by my side practically all the time since then. I'd like you to imagine yourself in my place. You're a criminal investigator; and I want you to recapitulate whatever points you think might help to bring us to a solution of this mystery. Don't bother your head with theories for the moment. Just put the

known in order. From that we might be able to arrive at the, at present, unknown. Fire away."

Marquis leaned back and closed his eyes.

Mr. Whittaker relit his big briar, puffed it into full blast, and, referring occasionally to the rough notes he had penciled on the back of a long envelope, gave his version of the tragedy.

"My brother-in-law—don't ask me to refer to him as 'the deceased' for heaven's sake, Marquis; I'll call him Arthur—as I'm accustomed to do—Arthur buried his dog, Bruce, this morning. Cause of death unknown."

"We'll have the dog's body exhumed and an autopsy made," Marquis interrupted. "Yes, go on."

"In connection with the dog's death Alice, the servant, tells us of his strange barking and growling, in the middle of the night, several times during the week.

"Alice testifies that this evening, sometime between eight o'clock, when the groceries arrived, and ten-thirty, the time she made the discovery, certain victuals have been borrowed or stolen from her pantry—a two-pound loaf, a pound of butter, six eggs, about a pound of bacon and a two-pound pot of marmalade."

Marquis again interrupted. "Mr. Unwin, I gather, was in the habit of cooking picnic meals for himself in the workshop?"

"Yes, that's so."

"It's quite feasible that he might have taken the victuals himself?"

"Yes. Alice was always running up to Mrs. Unwin's room, and it's just possible Arthur came in and took the articles while she was with her mistress."

"Quite."

The chemist glanced at his rough notes and continued: "I was present at the workshop this afternoon when Arthur disposed of an option on his latest invention to Merryweathers of Oldham. The sum agreed upon was fifteen hundred pounds. Payment, which according to previous notice was to be made in cash, was deferred until after tea. Arthur brought Merryweathers' two experts to tea here at about six, and returned with them to complete the transaction in the workshop about seven—my sister and Alice agree on that."

Marquis interposed, stroking his long black beard. "Now that seems queer to me. Why didn't Mr. Unwin let them hand over the money here? . . . safer, and in every way better than the workshop."

"My brother-in-law is . . . *was* a very honest—scrupulously honest man. Although the option had been bought pig-in-a-poke fashion, he told me, before I left—after tea here—that he didn't feel justified in taking the money without first showing them the plans and specifications and the working of the model itself. I pointed out to him that it was unnecessary. Merryweathers have already made a mint of money on some of Arthur's previous patents, and they had perfect confidence in his word that this new thing, the Logan-Unwin Mule, was a practicable affair. The only reason for the option being sold pig-in-a-poke was that Arthur contemplated making one or two minor improvements before applying for patent. He would never have bothered about the finessing of an option had it not been for his partner, Dr. Logan, who's Scotch, and not the sort of man to let an extra fifteen hundred go a'begging."

Marquis asked: "Did Dr. Logan know Mr. Unwin was going to exhibit the machine before taking the money?"

"Yes. Arthur mentioned it in the workshop before the doctor left—about five-thirty."

"And what did Dr. Logan think about it?"

"He said: 'Oh, all right—as it's Merryweathers I don't object—they're safe enough.' "

"I see. Keen about the money, this doctor, eh?"

Mr. Whittaker smiled bleakly through the settled grimness of his eyes. "Yes, in every way he's a perfect Scottie."

After restarting his pipe and taking another peep at his notes, Mr. Whittaker resumed: "At about ten to eight, Eli Garside, proprietor of the mews, warned Arthur of two suspicious characters loitering about. Presumably they were the father of the little dumb boy George Washington, whom you saw sleeping peacefully upstairs here when you inspected the house an hour ago—presumably his father and father's friend.

"Eli saw a heap of bank-notes and a pile of sovereigns on Arthur's dask. Arthur laughed at Eli's warning, and

showed him a loaded revolver. The revolver was mine. I've often begged Arthur to get one, and to-day, when I heard of Bruce's death, I took him that Colt." Mr. Whittaker sighed heavily. "I wish to God I hadn't. Only for that, Arthur would be alive now. I can never forgive myself."

"Come, come, Whittaker," Marquis reassured him, "you must not talk in that way. You did what any one else would do. The gun was loaded, of course?"

"Yes, but only in five of the six chambers. I bought the thing about six months ago. There was an epidemic of burglaries at that time, and I thought I'd better be on the safe side. Arthur laughed at the idea—said it was childish. He hated to be thought ridiculous or theatrical. And he wouldn't be persuaded to get one for himself. I got a hundred cartridges when I bought the weapon, and I spent a day up at Crowden practicing with the thing. Only five shots remained. Before taking it to Arthur to-day I gave it a good cleaning and put the five cartridges in the chambers.

"While Eli was talking to Arthur, Mrs. Radcliffe—that's the charwoman: you cross-examined her, so you know her version—Mrs. Radcliffe was scrubbing the workshop floor. Arthur mentioned that he was expecting a visitor. Both Eli and Mrs. Radcliffe agree on that. At about nine o'clock Garside hears a pistol shot, rushes into the workshop with another witness and finds the body shot through the heart. No weapon discovered as yet. A candle was burning, hidden in a soap-box, as if to shield the light from the windows. There are clear finger-marks on the candle. Bank-notes and gold were found scattered about the floor—in all six hundred and seventy-six pounds, the remainder of the fifteen hundred. On the Bunsen burner there was a small kettle of water, which commenced to sing shortly after Garside made his discovery, and it began to boil a few minutes later.

"Alice spoke to Mr. Unwin through the tube at about eight-twenty. He promised to be in for supper shortly after nine. Under the circumstances it isn't likely *he* would be about to eat a pound of bacon and six eggs; and yet friend Garside did find that extravagant amount ready cooked in the workshop frying-pan. He also found

a quarter of a loaf, half of Alice's missing pound of butter, and an almost empty two-pound pot of marmalade. Whoever wolfed bread, butter, and jam in such quantities, while waiting for the bacon and eggs to be cooked, must have been mighty hungry. There are finger-marks on the frying-pan handle—different from those on the candle. There must have been two persons at work.

"Just about nine Alice spoke to my brother-in-law through the tube, and was about to remind him of supper when she heard him say: 'Oh, wait a minute!' By the tone of his voice she felt that something was wrong. He spoke quicker than usual and seemed excited. She held on, with her ear to the tube. Half a minute later she heard the pistol shot."

Marquis was referring to his note-book. "Yes. Both Alice and Garside agree about the time of the shot—nine o'clock. This is more helpful than you know, Whittaker. Go on, please."

"Before going into the workshop, Garside and the cabman heard the noise of two men climbing the wall. The men who can clear a ten-foot wall in the time Garside took to walk the length of the mews must be very agile.

"They appear to have got away with eight hundred and twenty-four pounds.

"The police sergeant, who was fetched by the cabman, found the workshop key at the foot of the wall in the mews."

Mr. Whittaker stopped talking, rubbed his chin pensively, and then added: "Well, I think that's all as regards what happened to-day. My own story of Arthur's character and habits, and all likely events that might bear on the case—from my humble point of view—you already know. Have you formulated any theory?"

Marquis glanced quickly through his notes before replying.

"Yes, I have a theory. And our discovery about the clock here strengthens that theory; so does . . . well, p'raps I'd better keep my theories to myself for the moment. I might easily be on a false scent."

Mr. Whittaker looked meaningly at him.

"You mean that Wickstead chap who called about the option and never sent the letter as promised?"

Marquis smiled enigmatically.

"Well . . ." He stroked his long black beard thoughtfully. "I wasn't thinking *only* of Mr. Wickstead."

The chemist wrinkled his forehead.

"I wonder," he mused after a pensive moment, "I wonder if you've got your eye on that Mrs. Radcliffe—the charwoman, I mean? I never liked that woman—always prying about, and you remember—I told you, didn't I?—how I caught her listening at the door of this room one night. The night we read about the wreck. And Arthur would never let her clean out the workshop unless he was there himself."

Marquis listened attentively and then glanced through his notes again.

"We mustn't jump to conclusions," he said. "Mrs. Radcliffe's evidence seems straightforward enough. What she says fits in with what the man Garside told us. She had been with Garside in the public-house, and by the time she came back here for her wages she had begun to show signs of her drinking. Naturally the sudden sobering-up on hearing of the murder would incline her to nervousness."

The detective drummed on the table top with his fingers.

"Ah, well," he added, "we shall know soon."

Mr. Whittaker looked wonderingly at him.

"You seem to be waiting for something to happen," he observed.

"I am."

"I should have thought you'd be dashing about following up your clews!"

Marquis calmly lit a cigarette.

"My dear Whittaker, my business is to direct." He smiled whimsically. "I suppose a real detective is bound to look an ass. But real life isn't like a book. We can't manufacture our evidence like an author can."

"No . . . but . . . surely *something* could be done?" Mr. Whittaker got up from his chair and paced the room impatiently.

"Now don't worry yourself, my old friend. Believe me, everything possible is being done. My subordinates are at work. They're here, there—everywhere. You'd

be surprised if you knew what *is* going on at this very minute."

"Ah, you have discovered something tangible then?"

"I have. And, what's more, the traps are set. Would you like to see one of them? Very well—you shall."

Marquis rose, opened the window—taking care not to make a noise—and snapped his finger three times in the foggy blackness.

A minute later Mr. Whittaker heard the sound of cautious footsteps on the gravel of the garden path. Then a whisper:

"Is that you, sir?"

Mr. Whittaker insinuated his body in-between the window and the blind and stood beside the detective.

Marquis answered the voice: "Yes. Everything in order?"

"I think so, sir. Nothing doing yet. Not since I first heard them stumbling about."

"Sure you can keep your eye on this corner well enough? I mean by yourself?"

"Well, sir, eyes are not much use on a night like this. You can't see a blinking thing, but I've got my ears out like funnels. It's a tidy stretch of wall, though. It 'ud be better if there was two of us like."

"The others'll be here presently. Keep close. Better get back now."

"Very good, sir."

Marquis closed the window.

IV

They reseated themselves.

"What's the idea?" Mr. Whittaker demanded.

"I believe the two men who climbed the mews wall are still in the cemetery. The footmarks are traceable to the wall that separates this garden from the graveyard. It's certain they both climbed that wall, though they must be wonderful climbers to do it in this fog. Once they got mixed up with those tombstones they'd lose all sense of direction. The fog's thicker now than before. The wall all round the cemetery is fourteen foot everywhere, except this stretch here and another short bit that runs alongside

that big empty house in Devonshire Street. The cemetery gates are locked—too formidable even in daylight, and absolutely unclimbable in the dark. I have a man posted at the empty house and there's another here. At dawn we'll beat the cemetery. I sent one of my plain-clothes fellows for a scout round the cemetery at ten-thirty. He used to be in the Canadian North-West Mounted—like an Indian he is. He was back at the mews before I left. You saw a man hand me something? That was his report. Here it is." Marquis took a loose note from his book and read: " 'Two men in cemetery. Heard them bumping about and whispering. One appears to be nicknamed Humpy. They had evidently lost touch with each other. I waited, till they stopped calling in whispers. Not advisable to attempt a round-up till fog lifts. Have posted men, as you ordered, and also have arranged continuous patrol all round.' "

Marquis replaced the report in his note-book and then inquired: "Well—does that satisfy you?"

Mr. Whittaker was about to reply when the front-door bell tinkled. He went to see who it was and returned, followed by a police sergeant.

"All O.K., sir," the sergeant reported to his chief. "The extra men will be posted within the hour and the others'll be at Back Coldacre by five."

"Good! Let me see your notes."

Marquis glanced through the sergeant's recent jottings, made a short entry in his own book and handed the sergeant's back. Turning to Mr. Whittaker, he said: "There's no reason why you shouldn't get off to bed. I'll take a nap on the sofa. You'll stay here to-night, of course."

"Yes, but I don't feel like going to bed." Mr. Whittaker was nervously twisting his pipe-stem round. "I'm worried about Anne—my niece. It's not like her to be out so late; nearly one o'clock. I think I'll hang around outside at the front for a bit." He sighed. "Dunno how I'm going to break the news to her."

The detective put a hand on Mr. Whittaker's shoulder.

"I know. It's terrible for all of you. I can't tell you how I grieve for the poor lady upstairs. You did right to give her that sleeping draught. If you take my advice

you'll turn in right away and not worry about Miss Unwin. She's probably staying with friends on account of the fog; and I don't blame her."

At that moment the shrill of a police-whistle broke the stillness of the night.

Marquis quickly opened the window. The whistling came from the direction of the mews, beyond the confines of the back garden.

"That must be Lane," the sergeant remarked excitedly. "I left him in charge of the mews five minutes ago."

Then a voice came through the fog: "I've got 'im."

Then a groan, long drawn out, and: "Oh, hell!"

The whistling continued through the shouting.

The detective scrambled through the open window.

"Come on," he cried, "there's a ladder at the bottom of the garden. And, sergeant, use your lantern. I don't want those footmarks messed up. This way . . . follow me . . . along the path."

Suddenly the whistling stopped. At the same time a pistol shot rang out, followed immediately by the tinkle of glass on stone. Mr. Whittaker followed the detective and the sergeant as best he could through the dense fog.

From the direction of Back Coldacre there came the sound of heavy boots running over hard cobbles; a bucket rattled as though it had been kicked.

And the voice of Mr. Garside: "O blass . . . O damn . . . O dammanblass!"

V

After being interviewed and questioned by Detective-Superintendent Marquis earlier in the night, Mr. Garside had set about solving the mystery himself.

Quivering with excitement he went through his well-thumbed book of clews in the privacy of his office. He made out a list of suspects. It embraced nearly everybody who had ever set foot in Back Coldacre. The most important suspects he underlined and marked with a **X** They were:

"Gorg Washington's Farther" [Eli was keen on him].
"Them Ittallyians" [whom he disliked very much].

"Gorg Washington Hisself" [always an undesirable character].

"Mrs. Radcliffe" [a swift drinker—possibly an accomplice].

He examined his theatrical-looking pistol—a bright-barreled nickel-plated affair with a single chamber—and felt sorry he had not "had a go with it at them chaps as they was climin' over that there wall."

Mrs. Garside called him to supper, but Eli couldn't face it. He sauntered down the stable-yard to where a constable was standing on guard by the locked door of the workshop and remarked that it was a nasty night.

The constable agreed. It was dull standing there in the fog, doing nothing, and it was pleasanter to discuss the mystery with Eli.

"What's the idea of leavin' you 'ere?" Eli asked. "I can't see what good that is, now they've took the body away to the morchewary."

"Chief's orders," the constable replied. "Nobody mustn't come nowhere about here till he's had an inspection himself in daylight."

"Footprints and things like?" hazarded Eli.

"S'pose so." The constable banged his hands together and stamped his feet to keep himself warm.

Eli was fascinated by the officer's dark lantern. The constable explained how it worked and let Eli flash it round the mews. In turn Eli showed his pistol. They discussed clews, delved into speculation and solved the mystery a dozen times.

"Doesn't look like a detective to my way of thinkin'—that chap with the black beard," Eli observed. "An' what's 'e doin' anyhow? Nothink."

The other laughed. "Oh, he's got his own way of working. He's no fool, the chief. You can bet your shirt he's started things moving. You don't know him. I do. Never seems to do much himself, but he sees that everybody else does. Crikey! This fog gets right into your bones." He flapped his arms round his body after the fashion of cab-drivers.

"Look 'ere," Eli whispered, "I've got a nice drop o'

Jamaica rum in the 'ouse—an' if so be as you'd like a toothful, just to keep the cold out like . . ."

The constable became very stern and let Eli know that there was none of that sort of thing about him.

But the bright thought lingered in Eli's mind. After a few more desultory remarks he sauntered back to his own fireside and made himself a generous brew of hot toddy.

Mrs. Garside rolled upstairs to bed. Eli tried to stimulate deductions with Maxim Dane's latest exploit, but his thoughts would keep running back to the tragedy of the workshop. He donned a warm overcoat and a cap, and had another little chat with the representative of the law. Eli's breath was laden with powerful suggestion. Towards midnight, after about the sixth invitation, the constable yielded to temptation.

"Well, just one then. Just to keep out the fog."

It seemed silly to stand there all night after having tasted the comforts of Eli's warm and cozy fireside, "and I don't suppose I shall be relieved before seven," the constable complained. "It isn't as though anything can happen now."

Eli agreed and mixed another brew. The constable accepted one of Eli's bitter cigars and said it was "a good satisfying smoke."

Each told the other, with ponderous detail, exactly what he would do were he in charge of the case. A pleasurable hour slid easily by. The constable yawned and decided he'd better get back to his post.

"You needn't worry," Eli assured him. "Nobody'll know. My night cabby's got three dances to do. 'E won't be back till well after three."

"Still, y' never know when a sergeant or inspector might take it into his head to pop along," the law ruminated, fingering its mustache.

As he walked with heavy echoing steps over the cobbles towards the end of the mews, the constable was startled to see a stream of gas-light filtering through the fog from the workshop. Almost at the same moment he saw a figure moving through the light, ghostlike, noiselessly towards him.

He called out: "Who's that?"

The shadowy shape darted out of the patch of light into the surrounding darkness.

Eli, hearing the constable's cry, hurried out and shouted: "What's wrong?"

"There's somebody here. Watch out. Don't let him get past," Constable Lane yelled back.

Eli ran to the bottle-necked exit of the mews, pistol in hand. He called out: "All right. I'll watch this end."

The constable blew his whistle and ran wildly about the stable-yard with extended arms. Eli waited at the end, under the tunnel, staring into blackness.

Suddenly a body bumped into Eli. He shouted: "I've got 'im." Eli grabbed with his left hand, and, in return, received a hefty punch on the nose. Eli groaned and cried: "Oh, hell!"

Then, realizing that his right hand held a weapon, Eli pointed it blindly in front of him and fired. The bullet went through the window of his own office.

The fingers of Constable Lane, groping wildly in the darkness, suddenly touched on something—cloth. He grabbed. The thing he grabbed at struggled. Constable Lane held on with one hand and tried for a more tangible grip with the other. The thing gave a convulsive wriggle. There was some gaspy breathing. Constable Lane found himself flying through space, and then, for a time, he remembered nothing more.

Something pattered with a rush past Eli—very close; he felt it whiz by.

Eli made a dart forward, tripped over an empty bucket and barked his shin bone.

"O blass! O damn! O dammanblass!"

VI

When Marquis, the sergeant and Mr. Whittaker arrived over the wall in Back Coldacre, they found, by the light of the sergeant's lantern, Constable Lane lying face downwards on the cobbles by the pump. He was unconscious, and in his right hand was a man's dark brown jacket. The little door of the workshop was swinging open.

Under the glare of the sergeant's lantern the constable opened his eyes, blinked and groaned.

Marquis picked up the jacket and carried it into the gas-lit workshop. As he entered he was met by a cloud of smoke, thick, acrid, blinding. He coughed, started back and called to the others who were helping Constable Lane to rise.

"Get water—quick! The place is on fire!"

VII

Fortunately the fire had only just been started, and within two minutes they succeeded in putting it out.

Whoever had lit the fire had arranged it with care. By the middle leg of the chemist's bench on the laboratory floor was a stacked heap of shavings, chips of wood, and coal; and above the coal there were strips of three-ply and half-inch planking.

"Good job we found that out in time," the sergeant remarked, as he took off his helmet and mopped his forehead. "Another two minutes and the whole place 'd have been a goner!"

Assuring himself that the flames were really extinguished, Marquis bade the others wait outside while he examined the workshop.

The model of the Logan-Unwin Mule had been dismantled and the parts scattered all over the place. The drawers of the desk had been prized open, and the contents flung carelessly about.

The detective, using the sergeant's lantern, discovered several clearly defined footprints that had not been there at the time of his earlier scrutiny. These he measured, and in his book he made a rough sketch of their shape.

He wrote: "Running shoes—men's No. 10—rubber soled, ribbed crosswise."

On the long chemist's bench was a box of large Chump matches.

Marquis lit the gas in the smithy-half of the workshop and looked around. In the corner, between the packing-case that had been Bruce's kennel and the ladder to the loft, a tin of red paint had been knocked over; and on the third rung of the ladder he found a trace of the same red paint, ribbed—like the footprints.

He measured the height of the third rung and then wrote:

"Trace of rubber shoe on third rung. None on lower rungs. Third rung, thirty-six inches from floor."

He went carefully up the ladder, examining each rung through a glass. Reaching the loft, he added: "Very faint trace on seventh and also on floor of loft."

The loft was thick with dust, and he had no difficulty in tracing the ribbed impressions to the far wall that separated the workshop from the stable rented by the Italians. Several old sacks were lying against the wall in a disorderly heap. Shining the lantern on to the floor of the loft he saw, by the lines in the dust, that the sacks had recently been dragged from a pile of similar sacks close by the water-tank. On moving the sacks from against the wall he made a discovery that set him tingling with excitement.

Three bricks had been newly reset and mortared. The mortar was wet, quite soft. One of the bricks was set back to front, showing brighter red than the others.

Marquis was just on the point of descending when he heard a faint scratching. Turning his lantern quickly in the direction of the sound he saw a slight movement among the folded sacks by the tank. He went swiftly to the pile and removed the sacks one at a time.

Under the seventh and middle sack he found a rat. It was lying on its side, gasping for breath and almost dead.

Before leaving the loft he found something else—a small fragment of what appeared to be fried calf's liver.

He wrapped the rat up in one of the sacks. It made no movement. When he unwrapped the loathsome rodent in Mr. Garside's office, five minutes later, it was quite dead.

VIII

By the time Marquis had parceled up the dead rat and the fragment of liver in a sheet of newspaper, furnished by Mr. Garside, the fog had begun to lift. The detective and Mr. Whittaker walked back together to Apsley House, by way of Higher Ardwick, Luke Place, Apsley Avenue, and through the arch-in-the-wall. As will be seen, from

the rough sketch map, copied from Detective Marquis's note-book, they described the best part of an almost perfect square in doing so. Marquis opened the front-door of Apsley House with the key that the murdered man had habitually used.

Constable Lane, after severe reprimand, had been ordered back to South Street police station, with instructions for another constable to be sent immediately to Back Coldacre to relieve Sergeant James who had been left in charge of the workshop.

Arriving once more in the friendly warmth of the breakfast-room fire, Marquis made an exhaustive examination of the overcoat. He produced from the pockets: a bundle of drawings and specifications (recognized by Mr. Whittaker as being Mr. Unwin's memoranda—presumably of the Logan-Unwin Mule); a heavy-bowled curve-stemmed pipe, with a metal cover to the bowl and a screw-capped reservoir for catching tobacco juice at the base; a leather tobacco-pouch with metal clips; a tin box, empty save for adhering morsels of mortar; several cachous; a small trowel; two large keys (one old and the other new—the new one being roughly cut and showing marks of recent filing in the prongs); a short jemmy; and, from the inner breast pocket, a crumpled sheet of cheap notepaper, scrawled across in pencil: "If you don't come to-morrow I shall blab. You are not going to play that trick on me." There was neither address nor signature to the note.

Marquis asked Mr. Whittaker to try the jacket on. It was about right in length but too full in width. The detective examined every inch of it under the gaslight. Then he turned his attention to the articles from the pockets, scrutinizing each in turn through a powerful magnifying-glass.

When he had completed his investigation, Marquis turned to Mr. Whittaker again and announced:

"The owner of the jacket is a German, about forty-two years of age. In 1870 he was, I fancy, a sergeant of engineers, stationed at Meaux for some time during the siege of Paris. He has lived in Manchester for several years, alone in lodgings. He is of economical habit, crafty, a man who plans things ahead but who is also impulsive, a quick thinker, vain as to personal appear-

ance, something of a masher with women, a heavy smoker, very hard up at the present moment, a tall man —six feet in height—and broad at the shoulders. He wears No. 10 shoes, and he is anxious not to put on extra weight. I should say he attends a gymnasium regularly. He has some knowledge of medicine. Very likely he's color-blind."

Marquis handed his glass and the jacket to Mr. Whittaker. "Perhaps you'd like to take a squint at it yourself. I might have overlooked something."

"No need for that," the chemist replied, waving the offer aside. "The description's perfect."

"You recognize him then?"

"Without a doubt. It's Adolf Wartman. Used to be my brother-in-law's assistant. A dead wrong 'un. Got two years for fraud. Stole some of Arthur's papers—about four or five years ago—just before you were appointed in Manchester."

"Ah . . . that clears the air. You don't know where he lives, I suppose?"

"No. But I know he's a member of the Munich Club."

Marquis lit a cigarette and leaned comfortably back in his armchair.

"Just tell me all you know about him," he ordered.

The chemist did so. "But what gets me is—how on earth you managed to describe him so minutely," he concluded.

"Well," the detective explained. "The pipe—German style. On the silver band it says: '*Vergesst nicht Meaux. Ein Andenken an* 1870 *von Kameraden: Muller, Anderegg, Moosdorf, Drexler.*' That means, 'Remember Meaux. A souvenir of 1870 from comrades ——' then four German names. Meaux is about twenty miles from Paris, a very likely station for an engineering unit during the siege of 1870. I submit that the four names are of corporals. They made a present to their platoon-sergeant. The expert way he has dismantled the machine in the workshop, and the cutting of the new key on the table here, bolster up the supposition of his being an engineer. A sergeant would not be much less than twenty-five; that would make him somewhere about forty-two now.

The impressions of rubber-soled shoes found in the workshop point to the gymnasium. The girth of the waistline of the jacket gives the reason. Economy is shown in the jacket also. Notice the buttons: two have been sewn on since the garment left the tailor's—man's work. Men always use more thread than is necessary. Again, the patch on the lining—big stitches—man's work again. Smell the jacket. Slight perfume. Several cachous found in ticket pocket . . . ladies' man. The piece of liver found in the loft hints at the probable cause of the dog's death. Evidently the rat was poisoned also. The post-mortem will tell us what particular poison. To my mind it appears to be some sort of cumulative poison, like lead. He didn't want the dog to die suddenly. You'll remember Alice's statement about the dog's barking during the nights. When I first examined the loft there were three loose bricks in the wall. It's a nine-inch wall—double brick. The corresponding bricks on the other side were also loose. Now, both sides have been mortared up. One of the bricks has been set wrong way about, showing a brighter red than the others. That suggests that the man is color-blind.

"He knew the dog was dead. Undoubtedly he was after the plans and specifications of the machine. The Wickstead gentleman, who called at the workshop recently, was probably sent to find out how far the invention was advanced. Our German friend was anxious to strike the time when the machine would be almost ready but before provisional patent had been secured. He planned the coup well ahead. This old key is an exact duplicate of the one Garside lent me to obtain entrance to the adjoining stable.

"The setting fire to the workshop was an afterthought; else why bother about plastering up the bricks in the wall? That indicates an impulsive nature and a quick brain.

"Here's the tobacco purse. German style—inside there's the maker's name stamped—German again. There's a chunk of thick twist in it, and, at the bottom, fragments of a very good mixture. I take it he is at present too hard up to buy his regular tobacco and is putting up with thick twist.

"In the inner breast pocket of the jacket there's the maker's name—Riddle, St. Anne's Square—one of the most expensive tailors in Manchester, and the date when the suit was made. That proves he has been living in Manchester at least four years.

"Then the note—written in a woman's hand—evidently from his mistress. The paper's very poor quality—the sort you get in a penny packet of stationery—the sender isn't in the habit of writing letters. The scrawly writing—servant-girl style. She has some hold over him. The terseness of the note indicates that she knows her strength and needn't waste words on explanations. The note is crumpled, but not very old. Notice the sheen of the pencil marks through the magnifying-glass—quite fresh. There are no other letters in the pockets—why should he carry this particular letter?"

The detective reflected for a few moments and then continued: "He carried that letter about because he was undecided what to do. Most people are like that—they'll carry a telegram of a dozen words about and read it over a dozen times if it requires a momentous 'Yes' or 'No.' It isn't that they can't remember the wording. It's just that the written message helps to clarify the problem. You've noticed that, Whittaker, haven't you?"

"Yes—often—but go on."

"I'm trying to ferret out what he would do. Undoubtedly he was worried about that note. I suggest he crumpled it up after deciding not to meet the woman, then changed his mind again. At the same time he was worried about his contemplated theft of the plans from the workshop. I take it he would postpone his visit to the woman until he had accomplished the long-planned coup. Being almost caught in the act, what would he do? First he would go to his lodgings. And, knowing that the dark brown jacket would be held as evidence, he would change into a different suit—that is, if he *has* another suit—and he would perhaps try to hide the trousers and vest. I don't think he'd destroy them—too thrifty for that. And then I imagine he would make a bluff by meeting his mistress, to pacify her, maybe to threaten her against blabbing. We don't know his address and we don't know *her* address, but we'll send out a tracer to the Munich Club."

Marquis looked at the clock and threw away his cigarette stump. "I expect one of my plain-clothes men back shortly. I'll set him after Wartman." He got up and walked over to the grandfather-clock. "What I can't understand is . . ." He stood there stroking his beard and staring at the clock.

Mr. Whittaker was standing with his back to the fire, toying absent-mindedly with the ornaments on the mantelshelf. Without thinking, he picked up the vase and upended it. Something dropped on to the hearth amongst the fire-irons. He stooped to pick it up.

"Great Scott!" he exclaimed. "It's the clock key!" He held it up for the detective to see.

Marquis took it from him without speaking.

"It wasn't there an hour ago," Mr. Whittaker went on in an agitated whisper. "I'll swear that. And, besides, you saw for yourself that the vase was quite empty."

Marquis tried the clock door. It was locked.

"Pass me a taper, please, quickly," he ordered with an excited tremor in his voice.

The chemist did as he was bid. Marquis turned the key, opened the clock door and peered inside with the aid of the taper.

On the ledge below the counter-weights was *the missing duplicate of the workshop key.*

Marquis then knelt and made a careful survey of the floor. "Look," he pointed to a mark on the linoleum, "a footprint."

He opened the window and examined the sill by the light of the taper. On the white-stoned window-ledge outside there was another footprint.

The two men looked at each other in silence for a moment, then Mr. Whittaker spoke:

"We left the window open when we went through it an hour ago. The key must have been returned while we were in the mews. Do you think it's Wartman?"

Marquis shook his head.

"No. Wartman was wearing rubber soles. These are marks of leather—size seven. Notice." He held the taper close to the mark on the window-sill. "You see the ridges and rings of mud—and the bare patch in the middle of

the sole? That means the boots were very worn, waterlogged, and in a bad state. This mark is of the right foot. There's a hole in the middle of the sole. It's a similar print to some of those on the workshop floor, and there's an impression also on the soft soil of the dog's grave at the bottom of the garden."

They were staring out into the darkness. The fog was rapidly clearing.

Suddenly they heard the click of the door being opened behind them, and a sharp draught blew the curtains inwards.

Mr. Whittaker and the detective turned round quickly.

The breakfast-room door was wide open, and in the entrance, standing there, breathing quickly, his hair disheveled, and with perspiration streaming down his face, was Dr. Alan Logan.

IX

"The front-door was not locked," he panted. "I happened to lean against it, and it opened, so I came straight in."

Mr. Whittaker looked at Marquis and blurted out: "Then somebody must have opened it since we came in here. I see now. Whoever replaced the workshop key in the clock must have been about to go out by the front-door as we were coming in. He hid in one of the front rooms until we entered *this* room and then sneaked out, leaving the front-door only put-to, for fear we should hear the click of the latch."

Dr. Logan entered and walked slowly to the center of the room. He stared uneasily at Mr. Whittaker. "What is it?" he inquired. "I was out when the message came—attending an urgent case." He cast his eyes upwards. "Is it Mrs. Unwin again?"

Mr. Whittaker rubbed his chin.

"No, it isn't Mrs. Unwin. It's . . . it's . . . something terrible has happened, doctor. But I must introduce you two: Dr. Logan—my brother-in-law's partner; Detective-Superintendent Marquis."

At the word "Detective" Dr. Logan started and clenched his fingers.

Marquis looked fixedly at him. "Doctors are usually hardened to sudden bad news," he said, "so I might as well tell you straight. Mr. Unwin is dead."

Logan gripped at a chair back and his mouth closed like a trap. He stared wide-eyed at the detective.

"Found shot through the heart in his workshop," Marquis went on. "I sent for you on the chance of your being able to throw some light on the affair. Do you happen to know who it was that Mr. Unwin expected to call at the workshop this evening?"

The doctor flopped into a chair, ran a hand nervously through his thick unruly hair and moistened his lips.

"Good God!" he muttered. "This is terrible, terrible!" He made an obvious effort and pulled himself together. "Aye . . . he was expecting a visitor—the father of the wee laddie, young George Washington. Anne—I mean Miss Unwin—took it into her head to look after the child. They went to Ancoats this morning—she and her father—to try and make some arrangement with the parent for the boy to be properly looked after and sent to a home where he could be treated for his infirmity. Mr. Unwin had an appointment with the father for half-past eight, and he asked me to drop in at the workshop at that time to help frighten the man. The poor lad's been badly beaten and his back's covered with the marks of ill-treatment. I called round at eight-thirty exactly, but the lights were out in the workshop. Presuming that Mr. Unwin had already settled the affair and come home, I did not wait, and, as I was already late for my consultations at the surgery, I went straight there." His mouth quivered loosely, and it was patent he had difficulty in speaking. "It's terrible," he mumbled. "Terrible! I can't bring myself to believe it."

Marquis referred to his notes.

"The servant spoke to Mr. Unwin at 8.20 through the tube. He promised to be home for supper shortly after nine. Incidentally he asked where George Washington was. Alice told him the boy was playing round the bonfire on the croft in front. Mr. Unwin said: 'Oh, all right, it doesn't matter.' Alice is very certain of the time because she was looking at the clock here as she spoke through the tube, and she made a mental note that

Mrs. Unwin was due to take her medicine at half-past. Now Police-Sergeant Donovan was running his eye over this beat during the evening, and he stood at the narrow entrance to Back Coldacre from 8.20, for certain reasons of his own, until 8.30. He saw you enter the mews, doctor. There's a red lamp over the entrance. It gave enough light for him to recognize you. But from 8.20 until 8.30—the time he stood there—he is confident that Mr. Unwin did not come out. You say the workshop was locked up and in darkness at 8.30—that is ten minutes after Mr. Unwin spoke through the tube. It isn't likely that Mr. Unwin would remain there in the dark. It isn't at all likely he would climb the wall into his own back garden. I have carefully examined the soft soil at the end of the garden, by the wall, and there are no traces of his feet-marks. The only other way of getting out of the mews would be through Garside's house. But to do that he would have to pass through the kitchen. Mrs. Garside was in the kitchen darning socks all the time, and she is sure that nobody passed through."

The detective stopped speaking abruptly and fastened his eyes on Dr. Logan's right cuff. The doctor caught the look, shifted uneasily, and hastily pushed his cuff further up his sleeve.

Marquis shifted his gaze, looked straight into Logan's eyes, and rapped out:

"You left your house at about five to nine, returned at ten, went out immediately and only got back again just now." He paused, still piercing the doctor with his dark forceful eyes, and then, in a changed tone—quiet, polite, suave—he asked: "I'd just like to know how you have spent your time, doctor."

X

Dr. Logan nervously buttoned up his frock-coat and immediately unbuttoned it again.

He opened his mouth and was about to speak when the bell of the front-door tinkled.

"One of my fellows, I expect," Marquis hazarded. "Would you mind opening the door, Whittaker?"

When the chemist returned to the breakfast-room he

was followed by a plain-clothes detective, a constable, and Sergeant James, who had just been relieved at the workshop.

"Everything in order, sir," the sergeant reported.

"Very good," Marquis replied. "Who's that with you—Daly? Well, Daly can go and have a smoke by the kitchen fire for the time being." He wrote a few words in his note-book, tore out the page and handed it to the sergeant. "Those are your instructions, sergeant. You'll find everything ready."

When the sergeant and the constable had left the room Marquis addressed the plain-clothes man. "Sit down, Tennant. This gentleman is Dr. Logan—partner of the deceased—and this, Mr. Whittaker." He turned to the others. "Inspector Tennant, gentlemen. Now, doctor, your story, if you please."

Dr. Logan coughed and began: "Well . . . I went out just before nine to an urgent case in Longsight, Kirkmanshulme Lane."

Mr. Whittaker, who was wearily filling his pipe, became alert and inquired with sudden interest:

"To see young Fayle?"

"Yes. At Miss Unwin's request. She's still there. It's a case of fever—scarlet fever, I believe—and she insisted on staying there to help watch him through the night."

"Ah!" the chemist sighed with relief. "I'm glad to know she's safe. I was worried at her being out."

"Well," Marquis put in, "you returned to your house at about ten. Where did you go after that?"

"To another urgent case. A boy brought a note." The doctor fumbled through his pockets and finally produced a folded scrap of paper.

Marquis took the note, opened it, read it and laid it on the table alongside the Wartman relics.

Dr. Logan resumed: "It was a baby. The poor wee creature was suffering intensely. I did what I could, but I was too late. It died just about one o'clock. The mother nearly went mad. I did all I could to quieten her down, and then returned home, where I found a note calling me here. Of course, I came immediately."

"Had you attended there before?" Marquis demanded.

"Yes. The baby was born in May—I attended the mother before, during, and after confinement."

"Is the mother married?"

"Well . . . er . . . no."

"Do you know who is the father of the child?"

"Well . . ." Logan hesitated. "I have never been told."

"But you have an idea?"

"I don't think it would be fair to tell you whom I suspect. A doctor mustn't tell tales."

Marquis took up the note from the table again, and also the crumpled scrap of paper found in the jacket presumed to belong to Wartman.

"Come, Whittaker; you're in this. Do you notice anything?"

The chemist took both papers and studied them under the gaslight. Then he glanced at Marquis and whistled softly.

"That's extraordinary. Same paper, same handwriting."

"It's a lucky coincidence for us," Marquis observed. "Look here, Tennant, you'd better attend to this. Little Medlock—you know the place. The chap we want is Adolf Wartman. Wait a minute—I'll give you a description."

Marquis wrote it in his book, tore out the page and handed it to his subordinate.

"This woman—Florrie Radcliffe—ought to know his address, if you don't find him there with her. Never mind about a warrant. I'll fix that. If you don't get him there or in his lodgings, or at the Munich Club, draw the stations: and have help near at hand. I reckon he's a powerful man, and he might have a gun, so look out."

Without parley Inspector Tennant departed on his mission.

"Now, doctor," Marquis addressed him sternly, "you can keep your information to yourself, if you like, but, I warn you, they'll make it pretty hot for you at the inquest. If you take my tip you'll tell me now—who is the father of that dead child?"

After a slight hesitation the doctor answered: "It's a painful position. Look here—I'll make a bargain with

you. If I tell you what I know, will you promise not to divulge it unless it becomes absolutely necessary to do so?" He turned pleadingly to the chemist. "It affects you and me verra closely, Mr. Whittaker."

"I'll accept your bargain, doctor," Marquis replied. "The thing shall be a secret between us three, provided the exigencies of the law do not compel me to give it out; and I'm sure Mr. Whittaker can be relied upon to keep his own counsel."

"Very well, then," Logan agreed. "I'll tell you. The case was put into my hands last March by Mr. Unwin himself."

"Impossible!" Mr. Whittaker burst out. "Arthur was as straight as a saint."

"Nevertheless it's true. Mr. Unwin insisted that everything possible should be done for the mother-to-be. She was to be sent to a nursing home in Longsight for her confinement, and I was given *carte blanche* to provide whatever luxuries were advisable. My partner seemed to look upon the thing as a duty. Of course I knew *he* was not the father. That was unthinkable. There was only one possible conclusion, and from the innuendoes of the girl and her mother I was led to believe that the responsible party was . . ." Dr. Logan looked sadly at the chemist and sighed—"was . . . Sam Unwin."

Mr. Whittaker nodded slowly. "Poor lad," he muttered. "Poor Sam. So that's why he bolted . . . ah, me! I was sure it was a woman."

Marquis referred to the note which the doctor had just handed over:

"This Florrie Radcliffe—she's the daughter of the charwoman I take it?"

Logan nodded.

Marquis addressed Mr. Whittaker.

"And you caught this Mrs. Radcliffe eavesdropping, the night you and your brother-in-law were discussing the wreck—the night you first read the news in the paper?"

The chemist paused in the act of making up the fire.

"Yes. We'd been talking quite a lot about poor Sam. It was rather late. I suddenly heard a slight noise at the door here, as if somebody was pressing against it. I tiptoed across the room and opened the door without warn-

ing. Mrs. Radcliffe was there, bending down. I'm certain she had been listening at the keyhole. She looked confused and agitated."

"Ah!" Marquis looked keenly at Logan. "Now, doctor, as Mr. Unwin's partner, you probably possess a key to the workshop?"

Dr. Logan took a key from one of his waistcoat pockets. "Yes—here it is."

Marquis took it, compared it with the key found by Sergeant James, and also with the roughly-cut copy taken from Wartman's jacket. He then took the duplicate key from the clock case and compared all four, examining each through his magnifying-glass.

"Well, I don't see any reason why you should not retain your own key, doctor," Marquis at last observed as he handed it back. "By the way, had you that key on you when you visited the workshop at 8.30?"

"Yes. But as the lights were out and the door locked I didn't bother to go in. I was anxious about my patients waiting at the surgery."

Dr. Logan shifted uneasily in his chair. The detective's eyes were again fixed on his right shirt-cuff. Logan stammered out, awkwardly, as if trying to bluff away his embarrassment: "I see . . . you're . . . this . . . this blood stain seems to fascinate you."

Marquis yawned. "No . . . . not at all."

"I'm a surgeon, you know. I'd just dressed a girl's cut wrist when Miss Unwin called at the surgery to ask me to go to the fever case in Longsight."

"Tut-tut, doctor," Marquis returned. "When you've had as much experience of the law as I have, you'll have learned that it isn't wise to offer gratuitous explanations before they're demanded." He yawned again.

Mr. Whittaker also yawned.

The doctor got up to leave. The chemist saw him to the door.

Dr. Logan walked round to Back Coldacre. The cabman on night duty had just returned, after completing his dance-party orders, and was eating a sandwich in the office.

"I want a hansom at my house—4.45 sharp," Logan ordered.

The cabman chalked it up on the office slate.

"Right you are, doctor—4.45 to-morrow afternoon."

"No, no! Four-forty-five this morning."

The cabman muttered "Jerusalem!" and chalked up the amendment in large capitals: "A.M."

CHAPTER II

I

"LOOK here, Whittaker," Marquis addressed the chemist as the latter returned to the breakfast-room after seeing Dr. Logan out, "I'm feeling pretty well done in, and I shall have a deuce of a day to-morrow—or rather, to-day. If you don't object, I think I'll change my mind and accept your offer of a bed for an hour."

"Why—certainly. I'd just as soon camp out on the sofa here. It's certain I shan't sleep in any case, and you'll feel more fit to tackle your work if you do the thing properly. Come along—I'll show you the room. It was poor Sam's room. His mother insists on having the sheets aired always. It's pathetic. Arthur never dared tell her the horrible truth; and she goes on hoping that her boy will turn up one of these fine nights."

A softness came into the detective's eyes. "Aye. Mothers are like that—God bless 'em." He took the taper that Mr. Whittaker had lit. "Don't you worry yourself to show me the way."

"But it's no trouble."

"My dear Whittaker, do please allow me to boss the show for to-night. This sort of thing is merely regular business for me; but for you it's one of the blackest hours of your life. You just get your feet up and put a couple of overcoats over you. It's directly over this room, isn't it? Two floors up? I'll find it. Good-night, old man. By the way, I shall be getting up again in little over an hour. I'd like to splash in cold water if I may use the bathroom."

"Of course. You'll find towels in the cupboard."

"Thank you. Good-night."

"Good-night."

II

At five o'clock Marquis tip-toed downstairs again, tingling with the after-glow of his cold tub, brain alert, confident, deliberate. He gently opened the breakfast-room door, crept inside, built up the dying fire with a few chosen lumps from the coal scuttle, readjusted the overcoats on the sleeping chemist, and glided noiselessly out again, closing the door without disturbing the sleeper. He took his hat, overcoat and stick from the stand in the hall.

Constable Daly was reading a short story in *Family Folks* which he had discovered on the dresser—a story by Gerald Pim, about joyous girlhood and young love—a sloppy story, Constable Daly thought. It was one of Anne's—written under the name of Gerald Pim—and for the four thousand words of it Anne would eventually receive a check for three glorious guineas.

The constable looked up as the kitchen door opened.

"Come along, Daly," Marquis commanded. "Follow me, and don't make more noise than you need."

III

Just before the dawn, Detective-Superintendent Marquis lit a cigarette. Before throwing the match away he looked at his watch. He waited a couple of minutes and then whistled softly. A like whistle answered from under the Chancery Lane railway arches. Marquis buttoned up his coat collar and strolled casually along the right side of Devonshire Street towards Hyde Road. Outside the carriage-gateway of an old empty house he stopped, and waited.

From the end of the garden railings a fourteen-foot wall ran along Devonshire Street as far as Nicholl's Hospital, and, at a right angle from the junction of the wall and the railings, another wall—ten feet high—ran, for a matter of twenty yards, to meet the side of the old house.

Only a slight film of haze now remained of the overnight fog. Gradually, by imperceptible glissadings, the darkness gave way for the mysterious hints of dawn. Still Marquis waited.

Suddenly, from a distance somewhere beyond the cemetery, there came the signal he was expecting—the sharp short blast of a police whistle. The blast was instantly answered by another, then still another; three whistles —all from a distance but from different directions. Then a silence, broken only by the far-away shunting of an engine somewhere near London Road Station.

An early, market-going, greengrocer's cart rattled along from Hyde Road. An urchin seated on the back of the cart waved his hand at the detective and called out the previous season's pantomime catch: "Who ho, Whiskers! How's Treacle-legs?" The cart disappeared in the half-light and the railway arches threw back the echo: "cle-legs!"

Perfect silence now for several minutes, then the whistling again—long drawn out now—two, three, four whistles, all going at the same time, full blast, and coming near, nearer—nearer still.

The sound of running feet on gravel somewhere in the cemetery. The tinkle of breaking glass. A scraping at the other side of the wall.

Marquis threw away his cigarette end.

Scraping at the top of the wall now. Somebody on top of it; some one breathing heavily. Screened from view by the leafless bushes of the garden, Marquis stiffened himself, gripped tight at his stick and waited still.

The slithering of clothes against bricks and mortar. A thud on soft soil. A rustling of bushes. A scuffle in the half-light. Bodies crashing into crackling branches. Muffled oaths, futile kicking; then a rich Irish voice:

"It's all right, sorr; he's got."

A sharp crisp click of steel springs—handcuffs locking.

Marquis stepped through the gate.

"That you, sorr?" Constable Daly challenged.

"Yes. Is Sergeant James there?"

"Partly, sir," the sergeant gasped. "But the blighter . . . got a . . . hefty one . . . in my bread-basket . . . blast him!"

Constable Daly gave a twist to the cover of his dark lantern. A beam of pale light flashed through the uncertain gloom of fore-dawn and lit up the prostrate figure of a burly handcuffed captive.

"Sit up now wid ye," Constable Daly urged.

The man made no attempt to move.

Constable Daly seized the man's jacket collar and tugged: "Come now," he pleaded: "didn't I overhear mesilf till ye just now to sit up wid ye?"

The captive slowly rose to his feet; a disproportioned man of about six feet three inches in height, slightly hunched at the shoulders, with long arms—not unlike a gorilla. His eyes were of an unusual pale blue, cold, gleaming, hard, suggestive of polar ice—fearless, frozen eyes. He grinned, large mouth wide-stretched, showing oversized teeth, tobacco-stained, yellow and dark brown.

"I warn ye," said Constable Daly, "that anythin' ye say will be used agin ye whether ye say it or not; so ye'd best repeat it to ye-self till ye've had time to think, an' thin maybe ye'll change yer mind and wish ye'd niver said it at all."

The man just grinned.

A helmeted head popped over the garden wall.

"Did you get them?"

"We have one got," Constable Daly replied.

"All right. We'll beat about for the other."

The head vanished.

Marquis was stroking his long beard. "Just run through his pockets, Daly . . . in case he's armed."

Constable Daly did so.

"No gun?"

"Not a one, sorr."

"Any money?"

"Divil a cent, sorr."

Marquis spoke to the gasping sergeant:

"We can give them a few minutes longer, sergeant; but I rather imagine the other won't be found in the cemetery."

IV

"I can't understand why father is so late," said Mrs. Fayle after looking at the clock for the hundredth time. "He likes to go for a long walk every night, but he usually comes in before eleven. Now it's after midnight."

Anne observed: "Perhaps he has lost his way in the fog?"

Mrs. Fayle resumed her knitting.

"I'm sure that's what has happened. It's simply appalling outside. I do hope he's safe. He's been awfully worried ever since"—she hesitated slightly—"ever since . . . things went wrong, you know. And he's getting more and more absent-minded. I think the shock of Matthew and Mark going off like they did upset him more than the failure. He's aged twenty years in the last three months. And this place"—Mrs. Fayle made an exaggerated voluntary shudder—"you can't imagine how it hurts . . . after . . . after . . ." She broke down under the wave of self-pity and wept into her knitting.

Anne was instantly by her side, consoling her with soothing voice and sympathetic touch.

"Do go to bed," Anne pleaded. "Ernest seems to be sleeping quite peacefully now, and there's nothing for you to do. I'll have a peep at him every now and then, and if there's any trouble I'll let you know. Come along, now. Do be sensible."

After a lengthy argument Mrs. Fayle finally went upstairs, and, satisfying herself that her son was sleeping more or less tranquilly, retired to the front bedroom which she habitually shared with her husband.

Anne remained in the sitting-room, trying to read one of Ernest's books and wondering if Dr. Logan would have had the common sense to call at Apsley House to let her mother know where she was.

Towards one o'clock she heard the crunch of gravel outside, and then a fumbling at the keyhole of the front-door. She went to open it. Mr. Fayle lurched in—very drunk. He staggered past her, nauseating her with his foul breath. His hard felt hat rolled on the floor. He stooped to retrieve it, and his walking-stick fell loudly on the linoleum. Regaining the upright, unsteadily swaying, he regarded Anne with bovine stupidity.

With an effort to conceal her loathing, Anne said: "Mrs. Fayle's in bed. You had better take off your boots before going up."

He pulled himself together with a ludicrous attempt to appear sober.

"Wazzi gorra do w'you?" He hiccoughed, and glared.

"Come. I'll help you with your boots. Sit down on the stair."

He pushed her away, made a long arm for the newel-post, missed it, slewed round and flopped on to the floor. The massive hulk lay there, immovable, incapable—drug-soaked flesh avid for sleep—reeking of mixed spirits.

Mrs. Fayle appeared at the top of the stairs.

"That you, father?"

She ran quickly downstairs, holding her long nightgown above her ankles.

Trying not to appear embarrassed, Anne said: "I'll . . . I'll . . . just run up to Ernest for five minutes." She tripped lightly up the stairs and tip-toed into the sick-room, closing the door behind her. The patient was still slumbering, and, through the next five minutes of bumping and muttering on the stairs and landing, he remained asleep, and for some hours after.

A fire was in the grate; flickering shadows danced about the walls and on the face of the fevered Ernest. Anne stood by the bed looking down at him, trying to analyze, to determine exactly how and why she had become so interested in this man.

That he loved her she was sure. Did she love him? She was *not* sure. She called to mind the ideal of what she had imagined love to be before meeting him. She had tried to describe that idea in her writings—the short stories under the name of Gerald Pim. They were inadequate and feeble—those sketchy outpourings—far, far short of what she had aimed at. The ideal—her ideal—of love would always remain gloriously indescribable, and yet—she clung to the hope—possible and to be realized, inexplicably, mysteriously, by the grace of God.

Her feelings towards Ernest were suddenly made crystal clear. She did not *love* him. She *pitied* him, *liked* him; wished him to succeed, not only in the eyes of the world but more especially in his own; she wanted him to know self-mastery, to feel the thrill of newly awakened energies—the latent will-to-do that easy idleness had been threatening to corrode before financial disaster had stirred him to action.

But she did *not* love him. For the first time she knew it definitely.

Why then had she blurted out to Dr. Logan that she was going to marry Ernest Fayle? She searched for motive. The answer flashed into consciousness: *because she had wanted to hurt* that big hulking Dr. Logan—to sting him, and intuitively she had known that announcement *would* hurt him.

And why should it hurt him?

"Because . . . because . . . Flames flickered in the grate between light and darkness, and, to Anne's consciousness, self-discovery leapt and danced in analogous shooting glimpses. And, with sudden feminine intuition, Anne knew that Dr. Logan—heart whispered to brain—Dr. Logan too . . . loved her.

And then, watching the face of the sleeper in the lambent light, a startling illusion presented itself to her. In the moments of fleeting shadow Ernest's face appeared uncannily like the face of Dr. Logan. Absurd fantasy! In reality they were as unlike as it's possible for two men of about the same age to be.

Ernest Fayle! And she had told Dr. Logan she intended to marry Ernest Fayle!

Her thoughts flew to the drunken giant who had just lumbered upstairs. Ernest's father! She shuddered.

A groan came from the sleeping man. He tossed his head and ground his teeth. She moistened his lips and tucked the bed-clothes round him again. Pity returned—overwhelming pity—sweeping away her fanciful introspections.

This poor suffering Ernest tugged at her heart, as any other agonized being might tug—dragging on pity and mother-care.

Anne sat on the chair by the bed, and through the long night she watched over him.

V

Shortly after five o'clock Dr. Logan returned.

Ernest was half awake. The doctor administered something from a bottle he had brought. Ernest gradually

came back to consciousness, opened his eyes, looked intelligently at Anne and said: "What are you here for? It must be late."

Dr. Logan addressed Anne. "Will you leave us, please? I must have a look at him."

She went down to the sitting-room. The fire was almost burnt out, so she set about coaxing it back to life.

Ten minutes later the doctor followed her.

"It's scarlet fever right enough. Here"—he picked a glass from the sideboard and poured out a draught from a bottle which he took from his bag—"take this," he ordered. "It won't do any harm and it'll certainly help ward off infection. If you hadn't had scarlet fever yourself I wouldn't have let you stay all night."

Anne swallowed the bitter stuff.

"Ugh! Horrible!" She made a grimace and searched the sideboard for a lump of sugar.

"He can't stay here," said Dr. Logan. "I'll call in at South Street police station as I go back and order the fever ambulance."

"You think he ought to go to the hospital?"

He nodded. "He'll be properly treated there. It wouldn't be fair to others to let him remain here."

Anne said: "Oh . . ." and then stopped.

In his presence, now, she felt uncomfortable. Behind his brusquerie and his assumed professional manner, she detected in his eyes the lurking sex-hunger that had surprised her conscious understanding overnight. It was true—this man *wanted* her, as Ernest wanted her, as . . .

Grotesquely, the image of Ronny Waddington impinged itself on her mental vision. *He* wanted her too. Ronny Waddington! Ronny!

Her cheeks crimsoned.

What strange alchemy was at work? Ronny!

Ernest Fayle?

Dr. Logan??

Ronny Waddington???

But Ronny wasn't quite the same. Poor, funny, pink-fleshed healthy, ever so young, dumb-mouthed, eloquent-eyed Ronny.

Involuntarily her lips twitched with an amusement not unrelated to pity—the sort of pity one feels for a healthy

helpless baby that has burnt its fingers and is too astonished to cry.

Ronny? Ah! But . . . no . . . not Ronny.

She felt tired.

The doctor was watching her closely and talking in a low monotonous voice—a rambling list of symptoms, hospitals, and something about Mrs. Fayle.

"You'll feel better after a rest. Just five minutes. I'm going up to him again. Want to see him asleep."

When Dr. Logan crept out of the room ten minutes later Anne was fast asleep on the sofa in front of the fire, with a rug over her feet.

Anne woke up at ten o'clock. Mrs. Horrip was setting the breakfast-table, and at the door Dr. Logan was just coming in.

"I've brought some one to look after you, Miss Unwin," the doctor said, as Anne rose to her feet.

Polly Whittaker came in, dashed to Anne's side, and embraced her with unusual vehemence.

CHAPTER III

I

HUMAN capacity to assimilate sudden grief is limited. So much one may bear consciously. Beyond that "so much" the shock itself acts as an anæsthetic. Channels of thought refuse the stretch, become congested. It would seem that when the reasoning faculties are overburdened—when thought fails under stress of feeling—the mothering soul itself takes direct charge and rocks the anguish to sleep.

At Apsley House, Anne alternated between blank numbness of understanding and sudden sharp stabs of acute sensibility—as if her heart itself were weeping. Her will clung to one objective: she must forget self completely, for her mother's sake.

The faded little lady—now ghostlike—lay very close to the vast abyss. No tear came. She lay there, as if petrified, staring at the ceiling.

Anne watched and prayed—through timeless eternities, it seemed.

II

Downstairs, Polly Whittaker and Alice went about softly, whispering; furtively sobbing; ostentatiously cooking food; persuading each other, gloomily, to try and eat; creeping upstairs and begging Anne to rest.

Mr. Whittaker paced about restlessly.

Two men came and dug up the body of Bruce from the little grave at the end of the garden, and afterwards took it away (swathed in sackcloth) in a four-wheeled cab.

Young George Washington sat on the stone steps leading to Mr. Garside's office in Back Coldacre, crying his heart out.

Outside the mews a crowd gathered and stared. A policeman stood at the entrance. Reporters came to take notes and to draw sketches. Grooms and cabmen

bunched. Overworked horses, recognizing the Sunday feeling, drooped, blinked, drowsed, and dreamed of green pastures.

Eli Garside gave himself over to fame and free beer.

The Red Bull did a roaring trade. Eli held sovereign sway—until his capacity turned traitor.

Mrs. Eli manufactured Yorkshire pudding grimly, and thought out several choice phrases for the benefit of Mr. Garside's eternal soul.

At noon Marquis made another exhaustive survey of the workshop. Dr. Logan and Mr. Whittaker were present.

As he closed his note-book, afterwards, the detective said: "Well, I think there's nothing more to be gleaned here."

"You'll keep the place guarded, I suppose?" Dr. Logan queried.

Marquis pondered and then replied: "Yes, for to-day, just to keep the crowd away from the mews, but we'll take the guard off at eight this evening. It's no use wasting man-power."

Mr. Whittaker inquired: "Did you get anything out of that brute you collared this morning?"

"Very little," Marquis answered. "He won't answer any question directly. Simply grins and says: 'It's all right, mister, you just wait; my pal Skippy'll soon have me out of this mess, all right, all right.' "

"It's evident they're the murderers," said Mr. Whittaker, "and I'd like to bet that this Skippy turns out to be the father of young George Washington."

The detective stroked his long black beard.

"We're going to beat up the cheap lodging-houses to-night," he observed. "And, if you two care to come along with me, I can promise you an interesting glimpse of the underworld, even if we don't find our man. Would you care to come?"

"I'll go—like shot," Mr. Whittaker snapped at the offer. "What time?"

"Oh—say ten o'clock—my office at the town hall." Marquis turned to Logan: "You coming too, doctor?"

"I'm afraid I can't. The practice is really too big for one man. It's a hundred to one I shall be called out at least once during the night."

Mr. Whittaker rubbed his chin. "On second thoughts," he said, "I think I'd better call it off too. It won't do to leave those women in the house alone after dark. But, I tell you what, Marquis, I'll call round at the town hall first thing in the morning, to see what sort of hunting you've had. I shall never rest till you've laid the devil by the heels—whoever he is."

III

Detective-Superintendent Marquis changed his mind. Certainly a round-up search was prosecuted by the Manchester police that Sunday night among the cheap lodging-houses of the city, but the superintendent himself took no active part in it. He gave many instructions to his subordinates, remained at the town hall in his private office till eight o'clock, then took the tram to Denmark Road and walked the remainder of the way home, to a comfortable-looking semi-detached house in Cecil Street, Greenheys.

He ate a hearty supper in company with his wife and daughter, chatted lightly of this and that, smoked a cigar over a few chapters of "Hypatia" and went to bed like a Christian at ten-thirty.

Arriving at his office again at nine o'clock exactly on the Monday morning, he went through his mail, attended to a hundred routine matters, ran his quick eyes over numerous reports, and issued many instructions.

"Now," he called to his clerk after having completed the regular business, "you can tell Inspector Tennant to come in.

"Well, did it come off?" he inquired, as the inspector entered.

Tennant nodded. "Just as you promised. But you'll be surprised when you know who it was."

"We'll see." The superintendent scribbled something on a scrap of paper and slipped it under his blotting-pad. "Sit down, Tennant, and let's have the whole story." He brushed aside the written report that his subordinate offered. "No, never mind that. You tell me. I'm sick of reading reports."

Tennant cleared his throat and commenced: "At half-

past seven last night I sneaked into the garden. Of course it was quite dark. Waited by the wall until I heard the constable clear off at eight. Shinned over the wall into the mews, unlocked the door of the workshop with the key you gave me, locked it again after me, climbed up to the loft, hid amongst that old lumber—and waited.

"Nothing happened till nearly three o'clock. Then I heard a key in the lock. Some one came in, struck a match, lit a candle. Went down on hands and knees and examined the footprints on the floor. Then he took a piece of brown paper from one of his pockets. It was cut in the shape of a boot sole. He compared it with some of the footprints. It seemed to fit several of the impressions exactly. Then he got a mop from the corner of the other compartment, and a bucket; filled the bucket with water from the sink, and cleaned up the floor.

"After that he went through every drawer in the desk; looked carefully at each scrap of paper; seemed disappointed."

Marquis interrupted.

"One minute. Did he open the secret drawer—the one in the desk?"

"Yes."

"He knew of the secret drawer then? Didn't he fumble for it? Didn't find it by accident?"

"He opened it immediately he'd been through the others. It's certain he knew it was there."

"What did he do when he found it empty?"

"Seemed upset. Sat down at the desk and ruffled his hair."

"Then?"

"Then he searched the drawers in the long bench, then the glass case; searched everywhere. At last he gave it up. Ran the mop over the floor again—evidently to wipe out all foot-traces he had made—and went away locking the door after him."

"And you saw his features distinctly?"

"Clearly." Inspector Tennant chuckled drily. "But it wasn't the chap you were thinking of."

"No?"

Tennant slapped his thigh with great satisfaction; delighted at having caught the chief on a false scent.

"No, *sir!*"

"Whom do you suppose I thought of?" Marquis demanded.

"Why—Wartman, of course."

Marquis laughed. "Wrong again, Tennant. You were a policeman too long to make a real man-hunter. Wartman wouldn't go back there again. It was evident from his starting the fire that he'd done all the dirty work he intended. Here." The chief took the scrap of paper from under his blotting-pad and tossed it across. "Read that. If that isn't the man's name I'll stand you the best hundred cigars you can find in Manchester."

The inspector's face registered complete stupefaction. He stared at the scrap of paper, then he stared at his chief.

"Well! If that doesn't beat me!" Tennant scratched his head. "But, look here, chief, if you knew he'd done the murder, why didn't you collar him? And why did you give me definite orders *not to make an arrest at the workshop,* no matter who sneaked in?"

Marquis shook his head sadly. "My dear Tennant, you're a terrific worker, and I wouldn't swap you for the best of Scotland Yard, but you have about as much imagination as a fried clam." Marquis put a kindly hand on the inspector's shoulder. "Never mind, old man. You're unique anyhow. You can go without sleep longer than any man I know."

A clerk knocked at the door and entered. "There's a Mr. Whittaker to see you, sir," he announced.

IV

Marquis and Mr. Whittaker were alone in the detective's office. The latter was speaking.

"Then that infernal Wartman's got clear away?"

"I'm afraid so," Marquis replied. "For the time being, anyhow. Looks as if he had already made all arrangements for leaving the country. Tennant frightened that young woman—Florrie Radcliffe—into giving the address of Wartman's lodgings—a theatrical apartment-house in Rumford Street. It seems he paid his bill and took his baggage away in a cab on Saturday afternoon at six

o'clock; after that there's no trace, but a description has been sent to every port, and if he can wriggle through he'll be mighty clever."

The lanky chemist plucked impatiently at his lower lip and ran a hand over his smooth bald head.

"I can't stand it up at the house," he complained fretfully. "What with the creepy-crawly undertaker chap trying to look sympathetic, and those women sniffling, and the doctor fiddle-faddling all over the place. Anne's the only one with any real backbone. The place is overrun with women—women I've never seen in my life before—crying, and telling me 'It's so sad!' Telling *me*. Sad!" Mr. Whittaker gave a short grim laugh. "God Almighty, that's what they say if a pudding boils over. Sad!"

"Come, come, Whittaker, you mustn't work yourself up like that. You're worrying too much. We don't want *you* in the doctor's hands, you know."

"Doctor!" Mr. Whittaker made an expression of disgust. "Logan's worse than the women. Never out of the house. D'you know, I found him rummaging through Arthur's private desk in the study this morning."

Marquis did not seem very interested in Mr. Whittaker's domestic chatter. He glanced casually through several papers.

Mr. Whittaker rambled on. "Said he was looking for the will. The will! What's that got to do with *him* anyhow? He was Arthur's partner, I know, but . . . seemed a bit thick to me—messing with a dead man's private papers like that. I flared up a bit. He didn't seem to mind, though: said the will would have to be found sooner or later and he was looking for it to save Anne the trouble."

Marquis smiled. "I can quite understand that. She's an extraordinary pretty girl, your niece."

Mr. Whittaker's eyes opened. He gaped, then: "Well I'm jiggered! So that's it!"

"It generally is," Marquis twinkled, "especially when beauty is accompanied by the prospect of a nice little dowry. Dr. Logan's not the man to let good siller go a'begging, from what I can gather, and I suppose your brother-in-law must have left a tidy bit."

"The mean skunk!" cried Mr. Whittaker. "So *that's* why he wanted to find the will!"

At that moment there was a knock at the door.

Marquis called: "Come in."

A police-sergeant entered.

"Good-morning, sir. We've got him—the chap you're after for the Back Coldacre murder."

"Where?"

"In the office at Minshull Street. Walked in twenty minutes ago, cool as a cucumber. Planked down a handful of bank-notes and sovereigns and said he wanted to talk to some one in authority."

"What name?"

"Skipton Dale. Says he's the pal of that chap Humpy."

Marquis reached for his hat and coat. "This ought to interest you, Whittaker. Care to come along?"

The lean chemist was all excitement.

"Rather! I only wish we were going to see him hanged!"

Marquis took something wrapped in brown paper from a drawer and slipped it into a capacious pocket of his overcoat.

"Come along, then. But remember, old man, my job is to scout for justice—not vengeance. By the way"—he took a sealed envelope from a pigeon-hole in the desk and handed it to Mr. Whittaker—"that's for you, but don't open it till I tell you."

V

"If you don't mind I'd just like five minutes alone with him," Marquis told the inspector-in-charge at the Minshull Street police station. "May I use your private office?"

The inspector nodded. "I'll bring him to you."

"Sit down, Whittaker," Marquis said. "I'll not keep you long."

The chief went through to the private office and closed the door behind him. A minute later the inspector returned, crunching the sand on the stone-flagged floor, and

went to warm his hands by the roaring fire at the back of the general office. The place looked and smelt clean. The inspector made remarks about the weather, and then applied himself to entering up a big ledger-like book. Mr. Whittaker thought that police officers without their hats and helmets looked pleasant sort of fellows—quite human—reliable, married and settled down sort of fellows.

Five minutes passed. Then Marquis opened the door of the inner office and beckoned. Mr. Whittaker went in.

In the middle of the room an average-sized man was standing. His clothes were dirty and ragged, but his boots by contrast were noticeably new. His face was a mass of unkempt beard and mustache of light brown, and the hair of his head was like a quick-set thicket. Stolidly gazing through the iron-barred window, twisting a greasy cap in his hands, he looked a pitiable object.

"Poor devil," was Mr. Whittaker's first impression. Then, with a rush of horror, came the thought: "But this man murdered Arthur." He looked the wretched creature squarely in the eyes. The man started violently and shrank; shrank against the distempered wall, staring as if in abject terror of Mr. Whittaker's steady wrathful eyes. Then, with a heart-breaking sob he drooped, crumpled and fell to the floor.

Marquis sprang forward and lifted the man's head.

"He's starving—dying for want of food." The detective swept the overhanging fringe of hair from the man's forehead. From the window a shaft of bright morning sunshine fell on the pale, hunger-lined face. Mr. Whittaker felt curiously affected. There was a resemblance in that face to . . . to . . . Mr. Whittaker rubbed his chin.

Slowly the man recovered consciousness. The swoon passed; he opened his eyes; tears welled and trickled. He groaned and mumbled: "O God, O God!"

Mr. Whittaker stooped and looked hard at that emaciated face. Then, with sudden illumination, he cried: "Christ Almighty! It's Sam! It's Arthur's boy, Sam. *Sam Unwin!*"

VI

"Now! How do you feel? Better? You'd like more, I know, but it wouldn't be good for you—not yet. Don't worry. You shall have a jolly good feed presently." Marquis pushed away the empty basin from which Sam Unwin had been eating bread and milk. "Take it easy for a while. Come and sit in this armchair by the fire. There! Now, when you feel like it, you can tell us your story."

Mr. Whittaker stood—proprietor-like—beside his nephew, trying not to show emotion.

Sam Unwin looked nervously up at his uncle and then gratefully at the detective.

"I might as well tell you right away," he said, in a voice that trembled and sounded hollow.

Marquis nodded gravely: "Very well. But I must warn you that anything you say might be used against you. Half a minute." He went to the door and called: "Inspector, you might come and listen to this, and bring your note-book."

Mr. Whittaker whispered to his nephew. "Keep your pecker up, my boy, and don't keep anything back."

Marquis closed the door after the inspector had entered. The four men arranged their chairs in a semicircle round the fire, Marquis and the inspector with their note-books ready, and Sam Unwin related his story.

"When I bolted from home," he began, "I knew I was doing a foolish thing, but at the time it seemed the best way out of a bad mess. My position was this: Ronny Waddington—the son of my employer—was always asking me up to their house for billiards. I'm pretty good at billiards. Two years ago I was runner-up for the Lancashire championship. We became very chummy and he used to take me to a club—the Munich Club—where he was a member, to show off a bit before the other members. After a time he persuaded me to join. We used to go there nearly every night, directly after business, for dinner. After dinner we played billiards, or one of the gambling games—snooker, shell-out, cork-pool. I won quite a decent bit generally. But even with my winnings it soon became a problem, trying to keep pace with Ronny

Waddington. I tried to stand my corner, but my two hundred a year couldn't stretch to Ronny's allowance. Then, somehow or other—I can't exactly remember how we got drawn in—we started to play poker with the regular card-players, Germans mostly. We lost. Ronny saw how things were running and chucked it; but I couldn't. Every night I tried to win back what I'd lost, and came away worse off still. Very soon I was skinned. I made up my mind to cut poker out for good.

"One night, when I was practicing by myself on one of the billiard-tables, a chap asked me to make a fourth at whist. To oblige I played. Before I knew it, almost, we'd stopped playing whist and were in the thick of a poker game again. I ran short, and the chap who had persuaded me to join them at whist offered to lend me five pounds, so as not to break up the party. That night I went home owing him five pounds and another three or four pounds among the other players.

"The rule of the club is that all card debts must be paid before leaving the table. But of course that rule isn't strictly enforced.

"It was about ten days from my monthly pay-day. Here's where I made my big mistake. I borrowed ten pounds of the firm's money. As I had entire charge of the cash and the books it wasn't difficult. At the end of the month I covered the deficiency from my salary, and I determined never to touch cards again.

"But I couldn't resist the billiards, and from billiards again I was tempted to play poker. The chap who had lent me the five pounds was always pestering me to join in. I never liked the chap and, now I look back, I'm pretty sure he didn't always play a straight game. And he mixed with a queer lot too. I know for a fact that one of his pals was a dead wrong 'un and wouldn't have been allowed in the club at all if he hadn't been a German.

"There's a funny atmosphere about that club altogether. Nearly all the members are Germans: all classes—from wealthy men owning flourishing businesses to clerks. At times you'd take it to be a secret society. They have special feast nights when only Germans are allowed in the building. Only Germans may qualify for full mem-

bership. Others are what they call 'associate members.'

"Eventually I found myself in a terrible mess, owing about forty pounds to the fellows at the club. I stopped going. Tried to forget. One day I bumped into one of the men who had more of my I.O.U.'s than the others. He threatened to have me up before the committee.

"An insane idea came into my head. I found myself day-dreaming. The office routine became unbearable. There seemed no chance of my ever rising to a decent position. One night I drifted into the Free Trade Hall, where a fellow was lecturing about Canada. I made up my mind to clear out . . .

"Mr. Waddington—my employer—called me into his office next morning and told me I was to receive an advance in salary of thirty pounds a year, dating back twelve months. That was like a godsend. I planned to leave for Canada on the *Mary Queen of Scots,* sailing from Liverpool on the Thirteenth of December last year.

"Then I drew up a statement showing how I stood with the firm. As I would leave on the evening of the twelfth, the firm would owe me for twelve days out of the thirty-one of the month; so I credited myself with six pounds nine shillings plus the thirty pounds dating from twelve months back—in all thirty-six pounds nine.

"Unfortunately there were no cash payments received during the next few days, but there was a check for thirty-seven pounds payable to bearer. Mr. Waddington indorsed that check with the others, but, instead of paying it into the bank with the rest, I cashed it. Of course I entered up the payment in the books.

"Before I left on the twelfth—a Monday—I wrote a letter to Mr. Waddington telling him I was leaving and explaining how I had squared accounts with the firm. In the same envelope I placed a half-sovereign and a shilling. I put the letter in Mr. Waddington's private desk, where he would be sure to find it sooner or later. I had already booked my passage, and my kit was all packed away in an old cricket-bag at the Central Station cloakroom.

"On the Monday night I went to Liverpool, slept at the Bee Hotel, got on board early, with the other steerage

passengers, and at five o'clock in the afternoon we were moving down the river."

At this point Sam showed signs of breaking down. He gulped. His lips trembled.

"Take it easy, laddie," said Marquis in a kindly tone. "I daren't let you eat anything more yet, but if you feel too tired you can tell us the rest later—after dinner."

"No, no," Sam waved aside the offer. "I'd rather get it over right away." He continued:

"During the voyage I made a friend of one of the deck hands, Humpy Davis. He seemed glad of some one to tell his troubles to. The other hands wouldn't have any truck with him. They made out he was a Jonah, and, from what he told me and from what's happened since, I believe he *is* a Jonah.

"He'd been in twelve wrecks. He said he could always *feel* a wreck days beforehand, but never before sailing. About the third day out, he told me the *Mary Queen* would never reach harbor. I laughed at him. But somehow the idea of a wreck seemed to be in the air. The sailors pointed to all sorts of unlucky omens. Among other unlucky signs we had started off on the thirteenth, and there was a Jonah aboard.

"Davis warned me time after time, and urged me to stick to him when the wreck did happen. He said that a Jonah could not possibly be drowned. 'Above all,' he advised me, 'don't try to get into the boats. Stick to me and you'll be all right, all right.'

"Davis was so convinced of an approaching disaster that he rigged up a strange contrivance like a cage; a thing made of odd strips of wood from the carpenter's workshop, and slabs of cork lashed together with rope; and at night he never climbed into his hammock without first fastening a cork life-belt round his body.

"His repeated warnings played on my mind, so that I followed his example and I began to feel certain there *would* be a wreck. And, sure enough, there was.

"How it happened I don't know. We were driving before a gale one night when there was a terrific crash. I rushed on deck. Davis found me and tied a length of rope round my shoulders. I stuck to him. Everybody

went mad. Yelling, screaming, rushing about all over the place.

"Davis and I did all we could to help the officers. We got several boats down, but there was such a rush, such horrible confusion that discipline was disregarded. The vessel began to drop at the bows. Davis grabbed the rope round my shoulders and pulled me along to the stern. It was like walking up a hill. It seemed as if she was about to dive nose first. Davis dragged his cage along to the side of the ship, about half-way between the stern and midship, and told me to jump when he shouted 'Go!' We tied our ropes to the cage thing, clambered on to the rail; he shouted 'One—two—three—go!' and over we went.

"How long we were in the water and what exactly happened I don't know. I only remember holding on to that cage—it seemed for years. And the cold! Perishing.

"Somehow I must have slept, or at any rate lost consciousness. I woke to my senses in broad daylight, to find myself inside the cage, along with Davis. He must have manipulated the thing. I was lashed up in such a way that my head and shoulders were above water. The seas were big—like long hills and valleys. My limbs were so numbed that I felt no pain, but I was ravenously hungry. Davis fished out a private canteen from under his blouse. Food and drink wrapped in oilskin. We floated on the water all day. Towards dusk we were picked up by a five-masted American barque bound for Bordeaux with hides and bone fertilizer. I think I shall carry the reek of that ship with me to the grave.

"After three days in blankets we joined in with the men for'ard and did what we could to earn our passage.

"I had my money on me, wrapped up in oilskin. So had Davis his. We left the ship at Bordeaux and came over to England. Davis decided to give up the sea—after his thirteen wrecks—and I thought I'd try to make a new start for myself.

"We went to London and tried to find jobs, living in a lodging-house in Brixton. But nobody wanted us. After a few weeks of job-hunting, a fellow in the house where we lodged offered to give me a part in a play he was going to take on tour, on condition I would put ten pounds

towards expenses of starting. At last, when he consented to having Davis as carpenter and baggage man, I agreed. We played one-night and two-night stands all over the south of England, right away down to Cornwall, fitting up in town halls, schoolrooms, and assembly rooms. We rather liked it, Davis and I, but our salaries were not paid regularly. Soon, to keep the company together, I was lending what remained of my money to the manager; and one night, at Truro, the tour came to a sudden finish. None of us had any money, and the takings were not sufficient to provide suppers.

"Next day Davis and I left the company and set about finding work. All through the summer we tramped it, earning a bare living at all sorts of odd jobs. I always gave the name I had used as an actor—Skipton Dale. We gradually became accustomed to our gipsy life and liked it. Sometimes, when we were hard pressed, I would join in a game of pool at some village pub, and, of course, I could always pick up a few shillings that way.

"All the time we made towards the north. Not that we *aimed* north. It just happened that the chain of casual jobs took us that way. Then the cold weather of October drove us to the big towns. We had to resort to casual wards, moving on from town to town, till at last we arrived at Stockport. That was a week ago."

Sam was seized with a fit of coughing. Marquis proposed that the remainder of the story be put off till after the mid-day meal.

He addressed Mr. Whittaker: "Your nephew can have dinner in this room. I'll have something good sent in. You'd like to stay and talk with him, I know, but I'm afraid that wouldn't be wise—at present. You and I can invite ourselves to the police-sergeant's mess." He gave Sam's shoulder a friendly squeeze. "Have a good feed, young fellow. And here are some cigarettes for afterwards."

VII

As they made their way back through many corridors, after dinner, Marquis reminded Mr. Whittaker of the letter he had given to him at the town hall.

"You may open it now, Whittaker."

The chemist did so. Inside was a *carte-de-visite* photograph of Sam Unwin, and a note: "I borrowed this from the bedroom on Sunday morning. Will you please return it to the album on the table in Mr. Sam's room, in case the owner should be annoyed when he returns?"

Marquis chuckled at the chemist's bewilderment. "You've probably noticed it, Whittaker, I'm very vain about my marksmanship, and I hate being accused of fluking."

"You knew Sam was alive all the time?"

"Not *all* the time. But it was clear to me when we discovered that the clock was stopped. Would an ordinary thief take the risk to sneak all those groceries and provisions from the larder and then cook them in the workshop? Obviously some one had been at work who knew the household secrets and the run of the place. I was certain that the clock had been stopped by accident by whoever took the key. Then when the key was replaced in the clock I was sure. The fact of the front-door being only put-to when Logan came in prompted me to have a look in your nephew's room. That's why I persuaded you to sleep downstairs. I found an old pair of boots—still wet—in one of the cupboards. You noticed your nephew's boots to-day. He crept upstairs and changed them on Sunday morning, after replacing the key in the clock, and I fancy he was on the point of changing his clothes also when he heard us return.

"He crept downstairs with stockinged feet while you and I were in the breakfast-room. Then he tried to get back to his pal in the cemetery, found the way blocked by the police and cleared off. This morning he saw the newspaper placards telling of the important arrest, then gave himself up to save his friend."

Whittaker sighed. "Yes, it's simple enough when you explain. But, surely, Sam didn't kill his father? That's impossible, Marquis, absolutely impossible."

Marquis answered gravely: "The position's serious—damned serious. Personally I believe your nephew and his Jonah friend are . . . But no, I must keep my mouth shut. It's not easy to be strictly impartial always. We shall soon know the lay of the land. Here we are."

They all arranged themselves round the fire as before, but this time the party was augmented by one of the police-court shorthand writers, a middle-aged man with a dried-up face who sat at the table and recorded all that was said.

Sam continued: "When we applied for shelter at the Stockport casual ward there was no room left. During the night we tramped it to Manchester. In the morning I felt worn out and ill. Davis was all right. He's used to a rough life and can stand exposure, but I'm not. I had pains in all my limbs; felt completely done in. We got a job at the market—unloading vegetables—but I had to give in; couldn't stand the pains any longer. Davis stuck it, and at mid-day we spent what we had earned in food. That night we couldn't find shelter anywhere. All the free hostels—like Wood Street Mission and the Salvation Army—were already packed, and scores were being turned away. We tried to sleep on the benches in front of the Infirmary, but it was awfully cold, and the police kept moving us off. At last I thought of a plan. We walked to Higher Ardwick. I broke into my own home —through the breakfast-room window, took some food from the pantry, picked Davis up in Luke Place—where I'd left him—and nipped into the workshop with him."

Marquis questioned: "What night was that?"

"Tuesday night—or rather Wednesday morning."

"And the time?"

"I don't know exactly. About four o'clock, I should reckon."

"Didn't the dog make a noise?"

"Yes, a little. Then he recognized me. Made a bit of a fuss, seemed pleased—kept jumping up at me and dragging at my jacket; after a bit he went to sleep in his box.

"I found a candle, stuck it in the soap-box—so the light wouldn't be seen through the windows—and cooked the food on the oil-stove. At about half-past five, as near as we could guess, we tidied up the place, so that our traces couldn't be seen, and cleared out."

Marquis interrupted again: "Did Davis know it was your father's workshop?"

"No, I simply told him I knew the owner and was acquainted with the house I had broken into. Davis always accepted my leadership without question—on land, that is; at sea I took second place, naturally."

Marquis thoughtfully fingered his beard and put another question: "Didn't it occur to you to go home and make a clean breast of everything?"

"It did—many times. Looking back, I believe our drift towards Manchester was more or less the outcome of my own instinct. I wanted to see mother badly, but somehow I funked it. At the back of my mind there was a vague idea of returning home. But I wanted to make a decent show of it—to get a job and buy myself some respectable clothes.

"To crawl back, down and out, didn't appeal to me. Davis never worried at all. On land he's a supreme optimist. I caught some of his courage. We got jobs at the market and struggled along. Wednesday night and Thursday night we slept in a filthy lodging-house in Ancoats Lane—twopence each.

"On Friday we spent all our earnings on food and had to sleep anyhow, anywhere, in doorways mostly. Saturday was a bad day. Davis had a row with another man at the market. The policeman ordered us to get away, and consequently we missed our jobs. All day we wandered about, tired out and clemmed. At nightfall we were ready to take any risk for the sake of food and sleep. Then the fog came and I decided to have another feast in the workshop.

"We hadn't the patience to wait. I scouted round to Back Coldacre . . . about . . . must have been between eight and nine."

"If you can be more definite about the time," Marquis remarked, "it'll be all the better."

Sam cogitated: "Well . . . let me work back. It was twenty-past eight when we were in the middle of Union Street. I remember that because we stopped to warm ourselves at a bonfire in the middle of one of the small side-streets; the little boys were anxious to burn their Guy Fawkes, but the father of one of them, who appeared to be master of the ceremonies, insisted on waiting till half-past: he looked at his watch and said: 'It's

only twenty-past—we'll wait another ten minutes.' That would work out at about half-past eight by the time we arrived at Back Coldacre.

"I left Davis in the mews, climbed the wall into our garden, waited a few minutes by the kitchen window till I saw Alice go upstairs, then went in by the back-door, took the key from the clock again, grabbed a few things from the pantry and returned to the workshop.

"We went inside as on the first occasion. I expected Bruce to show up, but he didn't. He wasn't there at all. I thought perhaps dad had taken him for a walk, and in that case we would have to get our cooking done quickly. At the time it didn't seem important even if dad *did* find us there: we were absolutely starving. At the worst—if he had discovered us—I would have acknowledged myself beaten and begged for forgiveness."

The listeners were all strung to the highest tension as Sam reached this point in his narrative.

Mr. Whittaker leaned forward and inquired: "Did you notice anything, Sam . . . anything unusual . . .?"

Marquis checked him. "No, no, Whittaker. So much depends on what he says now. Let him tell what happened in his own way." Turning to the shorthand writer, he said: "Take great care about this." To Sam he whispered: "Don't hurry; and be very careful."

VIII

Sam became more deliberate. Thoughtfully he continued:

"From the moment we entered the workshop I experienced an uncanny fear. It was as though we had suddenly moved into a melodrama. The air seemed heavy with evil."

He shuddered and covered his face with his hands. After a tense pause he again took up the thread:

"I arranged the oil stove and left the cooking of bacon and eggs to Davis. But Davis couldn't resist the bread. He broke off a chunk and began eating. That started me off. We piled butter and jam on bread and set to. Then I filled the kettle, and set it to boil on the gas-burner. Davis fried the bacon, and had just broken the

eggs into the frying-pan when . . . God help me . . I saw . . . I saw a . . . something moving . . . along the floor from under the bench . . . something . . . at first it looked like a thin snake. Then I thought it must be water or oil. I felt it with my hand. In the blue light of the Bunsen flame the stuff on my hand looked purple. I went to the candle in the soap-box. *My hand was covered with blood.*

IX

"Blood! I dared not look under the bench. The thought flashed into my mind that Bruce might have cut himself and crawled there. Davis saw me staring at the blood on my hand. He came and looked under the bench. I watched him. He pulled at a black thing. It was the cloth father used for covering his models. Under the cloth . . ."

Sam's face was a ghastly gray—what could be seen of it—he rocked in his chair as if about to swoon. Marquis sprang up and caught him by the shoulders, then, unscrewing the top of a flask, he said: "Here, take a nip at this."

Sam took a mouthful of brandy. Gradually a hint of color returned to his skin.

"I'm all right now, thank you. I'll go on. Under the cloth was the body of my father. The left arm was under the body. The right arm was stretched above the head—pointing towards Higher Ardwick. Just under the right hand there was a revolver. Blood was oozing from the middle of the chest, slowly.

"Before I could stop him, Davis dragged my father's body to the middle of the floor. For a few moments I couldn't move—just stood staring—petrified. Then I began to realize. First I thought my father must have shot himself. But that was unthinkable. Then I knew he had been murdered. The revolver was close to where his right hand had been. *My father was left-handed.* He even wrote with his left hand. Some one had shot him and had left the revolver just by his right hand to give the impression of suicide.

"As these thoughts flooded through my brain I knelt

by the body, unbuttoned the waistcoat, held my face close to my father's mouth and felt the flesh of the hands: cold—stone cold. My father was quite dead.

"Suddenly Davis cried: 'Look here!' and pointed to a pile of sovereigns and a stack of bank-notes on the desk. I turned on him angrily and told him not to touch anything. At that moment there was a whistle at the speaking tube and, without pausing to reflect, I went to answer it. Alice was speaking. She said: 'Mr. Unwin,' and was evidently going to add a message; but I was impatient to tell her of the murder. I was just about to do so when Davis whispered, warning me to be careful. In my excitement I said something to Alice and stopped abruptly. The terrible position dawned upon me. I dropped the mouthpiece of the speaking-tube. Davis said he heard some one walking on the cobbles of the mews. I listened.

"Davis had the revolver in his hand. I heard him cock it. I tried to snatch it from him. He pushed me aside. I distinctly heard voices from the mews. Davis said: 'It's all right. This'll frighten 'em if they come in here.' I told him to drop the thing. As a rule he always let me boss him about, but this time the excitement of the moment got the better of him. I tried to wrest the revolver from him. We struggled . . . and in the struggle the thing went off.

"The report brought both of us to our senses. Davis let me take the revolver. I slipped it into my jacket pocket and made for the door, calling to Davis to follow. I heard footsteps coming towards us from the other end of the mews. I shouted to Davis to climb the wall. It was easy for me. Many's the time I climbed it as a boy, and I know every nick and foothold. I was on top in a tick and giving a hand to Davis. We cut across the garden and over the side wall into the cemetery. Stumbling amongst the grave-stones in the fog we lost all sense of direction; so we sat on a grave and rested, trying to think out what we ought to do. We decided to get out of the cemetery for a start, and set about groping our way out. Somehow we got separated. It took us a long time to locate each other. When we did meet, Davis was in an awful sweat. He swore he could hear some one crawl-

ing about after us. We sat down again, hardly daring to breathe, and waited.

"Then I thought the whole thing out coldly. Everything would point to us as the murderers. Davis, like a fool, had grabbed a handful of bank-notes and gold from the desk. I made him hand it all over to me.

"We were certainly in a desperate condition. The best thing, it seemed to me, would be to get clear away and then send the money by post, addressed to Anne in Davis's writing.

"All at once I grew clammy with the knowledge that I still had the workshop key in my pocket. Eventually it would be missing from the clock, and the murder would naturally be attributed to whoever had taken the key. I determined to replace it.

"I told Davis my plan. We made our way, after wandering all over the place, back to the wall separating the cemetery from our garden, groping amongst the graves. That part of the cemetery is very old, and I recognized it by feeling—running my hands over the tombstones, most of which, at that particular spot, are horizontal—flat, with the inscriptions almost worn away.

"The graveyard was as safe as any other place for Davis to wait. I told him to lie low till I returned, thinking to be away only a few minutes. But no sooner had I dropped into the garden than a police whistle was blown—over in the mews I judged it to be—and then followed a lot of shouting. I crouched against the wall, afraid to move.

"Suddenly there was a loud report, like a gunshot. My heart jumped to my mouth, and I broke into a horrible cold sweat.

"I heard voices in the garden, men running over the gravel, climbing the wall into the mews; heavy boots on the cobbles; men talking excitedly. Somebody shouted: 'The place is on fire!'

"Gradually reason asserted itself. A fire would keep everybody's attention in that quarter. So I screwed up my courage and crept to the side of the house, very slowly, terrified out of my wits at every little sound I made. At last, after hours it seemed, I reached the morning-room window. It was open.

"The gas was lit and I could see the room was empty. For a long time I hesitated before attempting to climb inside. However, once in the well-remembered room, the familiar surroundings quietened my fears. Very carefully I replaced the key in the clock, locked the clock-case, and put the clock key back in the vase on the mantelshelf.

"Then I thought of Anne. If only I could see her and tell her everything! The risk appeared small. I went upstairs, first removing my boots, to Anne's room. It was empty. I mean she was not there, nor had the bed been occupied. I dared not go to my mother. It was then I thought of the clean clothing in my own room. I tip-toed across the landing and opened the door quietly.

"Everything was exactly as I had left it nearly a year before; all my suits in the closet, smelling of camphor; not an article out of place. Just as I was about to change my clothes I heard the front-door being closed. That set me quaking with apprehension. I picked up a pair of boots, hid my old ones in a cupboard, turned out the light and crept downstairs.

"I heard voices in the morning-room—yours I recognized, uncle—and I knew if I tried to get out the back way you would hear; so I went out by the front, drawing it after me gently till it stuck in the jamb.

"I went round the house to the wall of the cemetery, was just going to climb up and call to Davis to join me on the garden side, when I heard a cough and the sound of some one approaching stealthily from the house. I lay down flat, close against the foot of the wall. Some one passed quite near.

"I saw a tiny speck of light moving about, waist high, and guessed it to be a bobby's dark lantern, not properly closed. For a long time I lay there, hardly breathing, hoping the policeman would go away. But he kept up a regular patrol, backwards and forwards along the side of the wall. I daren't make a sound to warn Davis, and I couldn't leave him to be collared. I reckoned he must have heard the policeman patrolling from the other side of the wall, and in that event he would probably move towards the other side of the cemetery. I therefore wriggled away from the wall across the garden, round the

house, through Luke Place, up Higher Ardwick and into Devonshire Street. There was one other way of obtaining entrance to the cemetery—the wall all round was too high to climb, but I knew of a short strip along the garden of an empty house, where it fell to about the same height as the wall alongside our garden. I thought of reaching Davis that way. But by this time the fog was clearing, and when I wormed my way into the garden of the empty house I found that way barred by another policeman. Some one moving among the bushes—anyway. I felt it was a policeman.

"What could I do? The main gate perhaps. Off I went round by Nicholl's Hospital and Hyde Road, using the opposite side of the road. To my horror I found policemen lurking everywhere.

"Along Apsley Drive it was the same—more policemen. One of them must have heard me. He moved across towards me. I bolted across the croft and over the wall into Marsland's trotting track, and through Marsland's garden into Hyde Road.

"By this time it was almost dawn. Suddenly I heard a policeman's whistle. I took to my heels. In my excited state it seemed as if a hundred whistles were going, and I imagined the whole of the police force chasing me.

"All Sunday I tramped the city, wondering what I ought to do. All night I wandered about, hoping to come across Davis, but without any luck.

"Just as I was about on my last legs with hunger and fatigue, I came across a watchman's fire near an excavation. He was a decent old chap, that watchman. Gave me some of his bread and cheese and a drink of tea, and let me sit by his side in the little shelter.

"This morning I saw the newspaper placards—went into the reference library and read the papers. Davis had been arrested. I came right away here and gave the money to the police officer. That's all."

With his hands hanging limply over his knees, Sam Unwin stared into the glowing fire, resigned to the worst, hopeless, like a poor lost soul staring into Hell.

While from the whiteness of her bed at Apsley House his mother gazed through and beyond the ceiling into the Heaven of her early learnings, where company and en-

vironment would be nice, where quite nice angels made quite nice music on quite nice golden trumpets, where *horrid* people were not admitted.

While on the Royal Exchange men herded, swarmed round the bulletin board, grumbled about margins, lamented the passing of the good-old-days, went downstairs into the good old Limited and had a good old whisky and soda at the good old bar.

While through the city streets large-footed horses strained at overloaded lorries piled high with gray cloth.

While moist-nosed newsboys shrilled their latest intelligence of the "'Orrible Ardwick Murder!"

While at Monsall Hospital, surrounded by a wooden screen, Ernest Fayle lay near to the valley of the shadow, rambling, groaning, tossing on a hot-water-filled rubber mattress.

While in Little Medlock slatternly Florrie Radcliffe, pink-eyed and puffy, looked questioningly at her dead baby in its little imitation-oak coffin. Drenched in self-pity, her conscience macerated and anæsthetized, dead to decency, her brain pulsating with vengeance, avid with the tigerish lust that only scorned women know—to destroy—she narrowed her eyes, visualized the face of the man she had learned to hate, and vowed that he should be paid . . . in full.

X

Chief-Detective-Superintendent Marquis sighed and wondered at the mysterious way of things—the way of love and hate, of life and death, of the Life that sings its deathless course through the never-ending reaches of the great beyond—of the world as it ought to be, and, with another deep sigh, of the world as it is.

Marquis the detective and Marquis the humane man occasionally got at loggerheads. This was one of the occasions.

XI

Marquis finished counting the notes and gold that Sam had handed over.

"It's quite correct," he announced. "Not a single coin missing. That's well in your favor, young fellow. Now, another little point. What did you do with the revolver?"

"Threw it away in the cemetery."

"Could you identify it if you saw it?"

"Yes. At least, I think I could."

Marquis opened the door leading to the outer office and called to the sergeant in charge: "Sergeant, just bring in that tray."

The sergeant entered, carrying a tray covered with a cloth. At the chief's bidding he held the tray in front of Sam.

Marquis removed the cloth. On the tray were a dozen revolvers of various patterns, shapes and sizes—relics of crime, from the private chamber of horrors at the Minshull Street police station.

"Is it among that lot?" Marquis asked.

"Yes, this one," Sam pointed.

Marquis looked at Mr. Whittaker. "Do you recognize it?"

"Yes. That's the one I lent Arthur last Saturday."

Marquis rubbed his hands with an air of extreme satisfaction.

"We're progressing splendidly. That weapon was picked up in the cemetery by one of the grave-diggers early this morning. Are you prepared to swear there were only five cartridges in it, Whittaker?"

"I'll take my dying oath on it!"

"Now, come with me, young fellow-my-lad." Marquis took Sam by the arm. "I'm just going to let you have a peep at your pal, and I want you to advise him, for both your sakes, to tell us *his* story. Don't attempt to put him wise to anything else. Everything depends on his corroboration."

They left the room, and returned half an hour later.

"Now for the next step," said Marquis. "We shall want a four-wheeler, inspector, and I'd like one of your sergeants for an hour."

XII

That afternoon the denizens of Little Medlock were startled out of their accustomed lethargy by the procession of four, headed by a formidable sergeant of police, that made its way into the unsavory dwelling of neighbors Radcliffe.

The quartette inquired for Florrie Radcliffe. They found her in . . . and they found her out.

Across the body of her dead child in its coffin, Florrie Radcliffe gazed with terror at the man she had accused, believing him drowned, as being the father of her illegitimate child.

She shrank and cowered as if looking at a ghost.

"The truth!" Marquis demanded. "Who is the father?"

Hysterically shrieking, tearing at her clothing, trembling with fear and eager for vengeance, she told the truth.

"You might be wanted to give evidence at the inquest," Marquis told her. "In the meantime you will be watched."

The party returned in the four-wheeler.

"If only we could lay hands on that devil Wartman," Mr. Whittaker moaned as they drove citywards. "Couldn't you get Scotland Yard to help you, Marquis?"

The detective was stroking his beard.

"I don't think we need bother the Yard," he replied musingly.

"But surely you're not going to allow the murder to go unavenged?"

"I promised you this, Whittaker. The murderer of Arthur Wellington Unwin shall be haled before the city coroner as sure . . . as sure as you're sitting next to me at this moment."

"You mean Wartman?"

"You'll see."

"Of course there's still a chance of its turning out to be the father of George Washington . . . what's his name? . . . Neath."

"Neath," Marquis declared, "has an indisputable alibi. He was locked up at eight o'clock on Saturday night for

being drunk and creating a disturbance outside a public-house in Ancoats, and he is now undergoing proper treatment for that distressing malady . . . fourteen days in Strangeways."

"Ah! Then it *must* be Wartman," said Mr. Whittaker.

XIII

An hour later, after hearing in full the evidence of Humpy Davis, Marquis returned to the Inspector's office where Mr. Whittaker and Sam were waiting.

"I'm taking a risk, and I'm placing my career in this young fellow's hands," he said. "Friend Davis shall be well looked after; he seems perfectly contented anyhow; but I can't release him. It's in the papers about his arrest, and I dare not let him free. But this Mr. Sam here is officially dead. I see that the registration has been filed and death is assumed. No entry has been made about him in the books here. I'll keep his testimony up my sleeve till Wednesday." He addressed Sam with stern directness of gaze. "Promise me you'll turn up every day at noon to report at my office in the town hall, and that you'll appear at the coroner's court on Wednesday whether you receive official notice or not—on your honor, mind."

Sam looked at him squarely. "I promise," he said.

Marquis held out his right hand. Sam grasped it without speaking. He was unable to speak.

"You're a brick, Marquis," said Mr. Whittaker with great fervor.

"Well, off you go, you two," the detective bade them. "Your mother needn't be told too much, you know, Unwin, and I should advise you to sneak upstairs quietly—like you did on Sunday morning—and make yourself look like a human being before letting her see you."

And that night Sam Unwin slept in his own bed.

CHAPTER IV

I

CHIEF-DETECTIVE-SUPERINTENDENT MARQUIS sat at his desk holding a sheet of blotting-paper in front of a small wooden-framed mirror. He twisted the paper this way and that, and from time to time he penciled a word or two on a sheet of foolscap.

Then, seeming to be satisfied with the result of his scrutiny, he put the blotting-paper on one side, took an envelope from a pigeon-hole, opened it, and shook out a number of roughly torn fragments of writing-paper. For an hour or more he applied himself to the jig-saw puzzle of fitting these fragments together. Most of them bore complementary relationship to one another, but some defied his ingenuity, refusing reconstruction.

The related pieces he gummed, in reassembled juxtaposition, on to a large white cardboard; then, referring frequently to the notes he had previously penciled on the foolscap, he filled in blank spaces with words or parts of words. In the end a series of more or less coherent phrases appeared on the cardboard. Parts of the phrases were in pencil—written in by the detective—while the remainder were in ink and of a back-sloping calligraphy. These latter were made up of the pasted-on scraps of the torn document.

Something of a message took form, but scrappy and apparently meaningless.

On another sheet of foolscap Marquis jotted down an occasional word—sometimes two, three, even four words.

After much crossing out and rewriting on the new sheet, Marquis took a red-ink pen and copied the words, tentatively, in between the broken phrases on the cardboard. The total result was an articulated script, made up of the back-sloping writing in black ink, the penciled copyings from the reflected blotting-paper, and the red-ink interscriptions Marquis had just added.

The chief remained for ten minutes, profoundly thoughtful, gazing at the patchy screed. There came a knock on the door, and a tall, thin, ferret-faced man entered wearing the silk hat and blue frock-coat uniform of the gas department. He carried a small black handbag.

Marquis greeted the newcomer with eager animation.

"Well! Any luck, Thrower

"Yes, sir. Least, I think so."

"Sit down, and fire away."

"I got in all right, fiddled about with the meter in the cellar for a minute or so, and then wandered about making out I was looking for leakages. They didn't interfere at all. This gas-inspector's get-up's a great idea."

"Um! A little too great, I'm thinking. It isn't the sort of thing I like, and I hope I shall never have to resort to such a mean expedient again. But I suppose the end justifies the means. What came of your look round?"

"Only one thing that looks fishy—might mean anything or nothing. On the ledge inside the attic flue there was a bundle of papers. I didn't open the bundle—just took a squint at it and put it back. It's quite clean. Can't have been there more than a few days."

"Ah!" Marquis stroked his beard. "Has Tennant come back yet?"

"Yes, he's in the inspectors' room, sir."

"Just ask him to come in, please."

When Detective-Sergeant Thrower returned with Detective-Inspector Tennant, the chief addressed them both.

"Now, I'm going to give you two the sort of job you'll really appreciate." Marquis turned his eyes on the senior. "You'd like to arrest the veritable killer, wouldn't you, Tennant?"

The inspector's eyes lit up.

"Holy Moses, chief! If you'll only say the word I'll have him here inside the hour!"

Marquis smiled. "Very well, then. Off you go. You and Thrower ought to be good enough to pull it off."

Tennant bounded to the door and called to the sergeant. "Come on, Thrower. The sooner we snaffle him the better."

As Thrower made to follow the inspector, Marquis

called: "Wait one moment. I say, Tennant, I suppose you're quite sure who *is* the murderer?"

Tennant flushed and twirled his mustache impatiently. "Of course I know. You wrote the name down this morning." He took a scrap of paper from a pocket and flourished it at Thrower. "That's the name, Thrower. And what a cool customer! Had the nerve to sneak into the workshop again last night—wiping out traces." Inspector Tennant laughed disdainfully. "Great Scott! The thing's been as clear as day from the start. Come on, Thrower. We'll hop it to Minshull Street for a warrant."

"You needn't worry," said Marquis, picking a long envelope from the basket-tray on his desk. "Here's a writ to enforce appearance at the inquest on Wednesday —a subpœna. It must not be an immediate arrest."

The faces of the two subordinates registered extreme disgruntlement.

"Better get a constable to serve it," Marquis added.

The inspector gloomily thrust the writ into an inner pocket. "Makes me sick," he observed with an appropriate grimace. "Sick! Abso-blooming-lutely *sick!* All this red-tape and bunkum. Why can't we collar him right away?"

Marquis shook a reproving finger.

"There's a vestige of reason in my madness, Tennant. I'll explain. The suspected person does not yet know we suspect him. The sight of a uniformed policeman presenting that writ will be the first intimation that we believe him to be involved. It's a hundred to one he'll make a move that'll give him away. From the moment that writ is served you must keep him under close observation. You'll arrange it, Tennant. Have the house watched day and night—and see he's shadowed wherever he goes. It's my fancy he'll do something in the way of destroying evidence to-night—after receiving the coroner's writ."

Marquis took another paper—a blue one—from a drawer, and handed it to Tennant.

"Here's a search warrant. But don't use it until after the arrest, and don't arrest until you have sufficient grounds for doing so on suspicion." He looked from one to the other. "Is that clear?"

Tennant mumbled something about "Weak-kneed humbug," and turned once more to go.

Marquis suggested: "Better verify the name. You haven't looked at that writ yet."

Inspector Tennant's bull-like neck turned a deeper red. "I say, chief, I'm not such a blithering idiot as you're trying to make out. I know my man, and I know where to find him. Didn't I see him with my own eyes last night? If *I'd* had the job on hand, I should have slipped the cuffs on him there and then. But a chap's not allowed to use his brains these days."

Marquis shook his head solemnly. "Tennant, you're a scream! You're the brightest ray of sunshine in this dull and rainy city. Do, do tell me—whom are you going to arrest?"

Tennant waved the scrap of paper that the chief had handed to him in the morning.

"I've got my orders in your own writing, *sir*."

The chief took Tennant almost fiercely by the shoulders and shook him. "One of these days I shall have to arrest myself for assault and battery. For the love of peace, will you tell me the name of the man you're so cocksure about as being the murderer of Arthur Wellington Unwin?"

Inspector Tennant very deliberately, and with exaggerated slowness, opened the envelope containing the writ, and just as deliberately unfolded the document.

Marquis indulged in a warning wink at Thrower and the worthy sergeant, knowing the humorous little ways of the chief, winked back.

Inspector Tennant read the name inscribed on the writ and then gasped out: "Jumping Je-*hos*-a-phat!"

Marquis pushed them both through the door into the corridor.

"Even now you haven't got the pronunciation right," he chuckled. "But I've no doubt Sergeant Thrower here will be able to spell it out for you." He was about to close the door after them when a bright idea flashed into his head. He flung after the discomfited inspector: "And I say, Tennant, if you *should* happen to lose your way, ask a policeman!"

Detective-Sergeant Thrower leaned against the wall

and stuffed a handkerchief into his mouth. Inspector Tennant turned and saw the exhibition.

The inspector bit his mustache, drew the tattered remnants of his dignity together, and stalked silently away down the corridor.

Thrower followed at a safe distance, almost doubled up, and from time to time spluttering: "Ask a policeman—O my godfathers—ask a blinkin' policeman! *Policeman!!*"

At eleven o'clock that night the landlord of the Jolly Waggoner at Levenshulme popped his head inside the smoking-room lounge and, following the time-honored custom, announced genially: "Time, gentlemen, please."

The sole remaining customer picked up his hat from the leather covered settee by his side, jammed it on his head, adjusted the woollen muffler round his neck, rose to his feet and stamped heavily out into the moonlit Stockport Road. The landlord bade him a friendly "Good-night, sir," and bolted the door.

The late customer turned to the left, and with hands deep in the pockets of his heavy pilot-cloth overcoat set off in the direction of Stockport. Passing the outskirts of the Levenshulme village he turned to the right along a narrow footpath by the side of a yard-wide trickle of water known as Cringle Brook. For several hundred yards he followed the footpath, until he arrived at what might have been mistaken in the moonlight for an Egyptian dwelling of the Rameses II. period. In reality it was the ruined cellar-foundation of a double row of workmen's cottages—dispiriting relic of some speculative builder's folly. The depressing ruin rose, between an angle of Cringle Brook and the banked-up main line of the London and North-Western Railway Company, to a height of twelve feet from the level of the pathway. These foundations, overgrown with grass and weeds, dripping with sweat-like moisture, forgotten-looking and suggestive of ghostly visitants, had been there—an eyesore and a menace—for many years, and, as it was to nobody's profit or interest to remove them, would probably remain there for many years to come.

The muffled-up figure in the blue pilot-cloth overcoat made its way around the square-squatting pile, down a crumbling stone stairway—slippery and treacherous—into the blackness of the rat-ridden cellars—dank, chilling depository of sinister corruptions.

Here and there, in sharp contrast to the double darkness of the enclosed ruins, a shaft of bright moonlight from the unfinished open chimney-holes lit up the higgledy-piggledy confusion of tumbled bricks and stones, puddles of slime and mold-mantled refuse heaps. The man's boots, as he groped through the eerie haunt, kicked against tin-cans and dead cats and dogs. The place reeked of dead things. Sudden squealings and scurryings hinted at lurking evils and ghoulish horrors.

The man struck a match, lit the stub of a candle and stuck the candle on a brick in a corner of one of the cellars. Then he searched about, picked an empty sardine tin from a near-by heap of rubbish, and with it scooped a hole in the sodden earth-floor. Taking a small paper-wrapped object from a pocket of his overcoat, he stooped, and was about to place the object in the hole he had made when a slight vibration of the crumbling structure caused him to pause and listen. The vibration increased until the unstable roof seemed threatening to cave in. The man took a large, colored handkerchief from the breast pocket of his inner jacket and wiped the beads of sudden sweat from his brow. From far away came the shrill shriek of a plaintive locomotive whistle. Rapidly nearer it came. A melancholy crescendo of warning, like the death-cry of a doomed devil, and mixing discordantly with it came the chug-chugging of the engine, the clatter of iron wheels, the creaking of strained woodwork, and the hiss of escaping steam.

The slovenly brick and mortar abomination shook and rocked as if in the throes of an earthquake, as the express dashed past on the banked-up rails sixty feet away. The noise lessened, died away in the direction of Levenshulme; the vibration ceased. A brick fell with a startling thud and splash from the yielding roof. The man turned quickly and peered in the direction of the sound. Then, realizing the nature of the disturbance, he hastily set about completing his secret task.

He buried the object wrapped in paper, and over it he piled whatever came to hand—bricks, scraps of wood and old metal, clay, anything.

He blew out the candle and replaced the stub of tallow in a pocket. Guided by the occasional shafts of moonlight, he stumbled from cellar to cellar until he reached the foot of the uncertain stone stairway.

Just as he was about to mount the steps there came the sharp snap of a breaking twig from the direction of the brook—somewhere to his right. For a minute he remained motionless. Then, carefully testing each step before trusting it with his full weight, he mounted to the upper air and the moonlight.

He surveyed the landscape on every side. Far away, along the railway, lights shone—colored lights, red and green. From Levenshulme lights appeared like little bright dots—from bedroom windows; everywhere else moonlight and shadow made marked contrast.

Straining his ears, he thought he heard a movement at the other end of the ruins. He hesitated, then as if making up his mind, he walked quickly under the railway arch, where, safely hidden in shadow, he stopped and glanced back.

On the roof of the abandoned cellars, silhouetted in the moonlight against the skyline, were two creeping figures —two men moving noiselessly towards him.

He walked quickly through the long echoing archway —one might better call it a tunnel—and out on the other side of the embankment into the moonlight again.

The men were after him now. He could hear footbeats echoing through the tunnel.

In front of him stretched a vista of open country, flat, dotted here and there with trees—single and in clumps, thickets, fields as far as the eye could see, all lit up by the moon.

Running now, he hurried to the walled-up exit of the brook where it emerged from the tube-shaped culvert beneath the railway embankment—scrambled down the wall and slushed upstream into the culvert itself.

Here he rested in the darkness holding his breath—listening. He heard the pursuers running along the pathway by the brookside towards Burnage; he could see them

poking about the bushes that bordered the watercourse. They passed out of sight, calling upon each other to hurry up and to look out.

The fugitive bent his head to avoid the low roof and pushed through the noisome drain until he stood once more by the forsaken cellars.

Sweat streamed down his face and he puffed laboriously. As he stood hesitating, undecided whether to take refuge again in the cellars or to make a bold dash across country towards Stockport Road, a heavy bulk dropped from the railway embankment close to where he waited. He took up a defensive attitude.

A voice whispered: "Quick! They're coming back. Give me your overcoat and hat. Look sharp, man. Don't you understand? I'm helping you."

The owner of the voice snatched the other's hat, giving his own cloth cap in exchange, almost tore the overcoat from the back of the hunted man, thrust himself into it and whispered excitedly: "Climb the embankment and lie low. I'll draw them off. Quick! I can hear them coming." As he gave instructions he pushed the fugitive into safety, and then he bounded over the roof of the cellars, and, as the pursuers emerged from the culvert, leapt down on to the opposite side of the brook and loped away at a moderate pace—in full view—towards Stockport Road. The sleuths followed—across the main road and down a narrow lane towards Reddish.

Sure now that the hunters were well away on a false scent, the original quarry hastily made his way once more into the evil-looking ruins, unearthed the thing he had lately been at such pains to hide there, slipped it into his pocket and walked briskly towards the high road.

A four-wheeled cab was crawling along towards the city.

"Cab, sir?" the driver suggested, making a salute with his whip.

He hesitated a second, then, giving an address, he stepped inside.

The cabby evidently didn't catch the instructions. He descended from his seat and opened the cab door. With an interrogative up-jerk of the head, characteristic of his

class, the man thrust his face right inside the conveyance and waited to be given the address again.

The fare repeated it, but before the directions were complete, there was a sharp metallic click, and he was no longer a fugitive but a prisoner with gyves upon his wrists.

The driver whistled. A stout man came from out of the shadow of the hedge and touched his hat.

The driver (who was not really the driver) instructed him: "It's all right now. Drive to South Street."

The other—the real cabby—touched his hat again and replied: "Yes, sir." As he mounted his perch he added: "Neat bit o' work that, Mr. Marquis. I 'eard the darbies snap 'ome from where I was standin'. D'you think 'e's safe?"

Chief-Detective-Superintendent Marquis chuckled softly. "I'll sit with him myself just to make sure. Now off you go. This hanging about at night isn't healthy for men of our age. Get a move on." And as he spoke he deftly abstracted a small heavy object wrapped in paper from his prisoner's pocket. Inside the paper was a revolver.

As the cab approached the corner of Albert Road, Marquis caught sight of a police-sergeant standing on the curb in front of the Wagon and Horses Inn. The chief stopped the cab and called the sergeant over. After a brief colloquy the latter banged his stick several times on the pavement. A few minutes later a police constable appeared from a side street walking briskly towards them.

III

It was during the small hours of Tuesday morning that Marquis rang the night bell of Dr. Logan's front-door.

"Doctor in?" he inquired of the sharp-eyed, night-attired maid who answered the summons.

"No, sir."

"I'll come in and wait then."

"Is it urgent, sir?"

"Very. But you need not wait up."

The girl ushered him into the waiting-room, lit the gas

and the asbestos stove, and hesitated, hanging on to the door as if in doubt.

"You needn't worry," Marquis assured her. "I shall be quite comfortable here, and there's no earthly reason why you should miss your sleep."

"Thank you, sir. Good-night, sir."

Marquis, after satisfying himself that the maid had really returned and that nobody could see into the room through the blinds, took a bulky parcel from under his overcoat, opened it, settled himself in a chair, and proceeded steadily to read through the various documents of which the bundle was composed.

For over two hours he studied these papers, then he put them together again and made the parcel up as it had been before.

He looked at his watch, turned out the light, settled himself as comfortably as possible before the blue flames of the asbestos . . . and waited.

It was nearly three o'clock when the grating of a key in the lock of the front-door warned him of the doctor's return. The door was opened and closed. Footsteps—guarded footsteps—passed along the lobby to the door leading directly to the surgery. The surgery door was closed gently. A match was struck. There was the squeal of newly-lit gas. Marquis heard the sound of breathing and of a weighty body flopping, exhausted, into a chair.

He went to the communicating door, knocked sharply and suddenly, and at the same moment turned the handle and flung the door wide.

"I'm sorry to trouble you at such an hour, doctor," he apologized blandly, "but I'm sure you'll agree that you and I have tremendous things to talk about."

Dr. Logan was instantly on his feet, wild-eyed, fists clenched, jaw thrust forward, uncertain how to act, but ready, if needs be, to fight. His face was grimy and traced with innumerable rivulets of perspiration. In the left leg of his trousers was a big right-angled rent, flapping, exposing the blue under-pant. His one-time stiff white collar was now a flabby twist of dirty wet rag.

"In the first place," Marquis went on, "I must return to you your lost property." As he spoke the detective

brought out the bundle of papers from under his buttoned-up jacket and offered it.

Logan stared and shrank back slightly, as if suspecting a trap.

"What . . . what is it?" he asked thickly and with a gulp.

"Better open it and look."

Nervously, clumsily, Logan tore off the string and the brown paper wrapping. He gazed in stupefaction at the bundle of papers—all neatly tied up with green tape. Then he looked appealingly at Marquis.

"Where did you find them?"

Marquis shrugged.

"Have you read them?"

Marquis nodded. "It was necessary. After the arrest I searched the house where he had been living."

"Arrest?"

"Yes. I arrested him ten minutes after you started my fellows off on that false scent. A clever trick, that."

"You know that."

"I think I know the best part of everything—now."

Dr. Logan lowered his head and placed his hands over his face.

After a silence Marquis touched the doctor's shoulder and said, with a warm, confidence-inspiring kindliness:

"I understand, quite, what it means for you. It's only natural that you should try to throw dust in our eyes and help him to escape. But we have him now. There's nothing more to be done. There's no need for you to incriminate yourself further. Come now. Can't you look upon me as your friend?"

Logan looked up wearily. "After all I have done to thwart you?"

Marquis smiled with great understanding. "Can I blame you for helping your own father?"

Logan rocked himself despairingly and cried "Good God!"

"Let me tell you this," Marquis continued, seating himself in a chair opposite the doctor, "the evidence is conclusive." He placed a revolver on the table. "This weapon was found on him to-night. He tried to get rid of it after being served with a writ to appear at the inquest.

He was seen going out of the mews on Saturday night by Sergeant Donovan—just before you went there yourself and found the place locked up and the lights out. His footprints were found on the newly scrubbed floor of the workshop. I might as well tell you that *you* were observed corroborating those footmarks in the middle of Sunday night?"

Logan stared bewilderingly. "You know that?"

"We know much more. The bullet found in the body at the post-mortem exactly compares with the remaining five in the magazine of this revolver. There can be no doubt whatever that the murder was committed by the man I arrested to-night—William Fayle."

IV

Dr. Logan wrung his hands and rocked his body in sheer extremis of mental anguish.

"Good God! O God! O God Almighty! To know that he is my father—that I am the son of a man arrested for murder!"

He rose from his chair and walked backwards and forwards across the little room.

"And that good man who was my best friend—to meet with such an end—just as success had come to him after a lifetime of toil! O God! O God! And that poor lady, his wife . . . And the other . . . Anne! God help her . . . O God help her!"

His face twitched with agony, his voice broke with sobs. A man tight-wrung with despair, he paced the room, raising his arms and throwing them limply down.

Several times he rucked up the strip of loose Persian rug and, without knowing what he was doing, stooped to smooth it out again.

At last he reseated himself, made a great effort, and spoke with an attempt at calmness.

"I suppose I shall have to tell all I know at the inquest?"

"I'm afraid so. I'm mighty sorry for you, Logan. These few days must have been a terrible time, and now there's the ordeal of the inquest for you to face. It's going to be a rotten job. Doctors generally do look fool-

ish in the witness box, even when they're not involved as you are. Through being conscientious, I suppose. A butcher can be emphatic and convincing in giving evidence, but a doctor has to step warily. Now *you* have your reputation to consider. Let's talk it over and see if we can't hit on a plan to make it easier for you. First of all I'd like your story. Not as evidence, mind. Just tell me in a friendly sort of way. It's not only you I'd like to help. I'm thinking more of . . . a certain little lady. Do you understand?"

Logan's eyes flashed. He spoke quickly, excitedly.

"Gad! It's good to hear you say that. It's chiefly for her sake I've messed myself up in all this. For my own career I don't care overmuch. There are too many shadows over me. But if we can spare her . . . if we can keep her name out of it all . . ."

"You think, then, Miss Unwin is . . .?"

"I know for a fact she's in love with Ernest Fayle. Last Saturday she herself told me she intended to marry him. Can't we help her, Mr. Marquis?"

The chief looked deeply into Logan's eyes.

"You love her? Pardon my question—it's necessary if I'm to help."

"I love her," Logan replied, "sincerely, with all my heart and soul. But she does not know. And she must *never* know."

Marquis sighed.

"I understand," he said quietly. "Life is a stranger drama than anything Drury Lane can offer. When we're allowed to know the hidden causes, the secret motives, the 'why' and the 'wherefore' of what men and women do to fulfill their destinies—we see that good and evil, love and hate, sacrifice and crime, are so wondrously interwoven, so inevitably complementary to each other, that one hesitates to praise or condemn; one is urged to regard the play as a whole and not to pry too deeply into the make-up of individuals." Marquis paused and then, as if summing up his philosophy, added: "There is always the extenuating circumstance—if one could only find it. We must not expect too much. It's impossible to understand what others suffer, what handicaps they carry; one learns to smile gently, and not to be unkind."

Logan was hardly conscious of what the other was saying. Following the run of his own thoughts he asked: "Is there no chance for . . . for . . . William Fayle?"

Marquis sighed and shook his head sadly.

"I'm afraid there isn't the ghost of a chance—that's my candid opinion. But I'm wondering . . . I'm wondering if your evidence need drag in"—he pointed to the bundle of papers on the table—"all the dirty linen of that slumbering tragedy. You see what it would mean?"

"You have read the conditions of Dr. Beamish's will?"

"I have read the whole thing from beginning to end. The best thing you can do is to tell me the whole story of how these papers became involved in the Back Coldacre mystery, and exactly how you came to know that William Fayle murdered your late partner."

Dr. Logan ruffled his hair and paced the room.

"I agree," he said at last. "I'll tell you all I know."

V.

Before my predecessor—Dr. Beamish—died, I had no idea of any mystery attached to my name or my birth. My parents, or rather the good people I had always *supposed* to be my parents, were both Scots folk. We lived always, so far as I can remember, at Aberdeen. My father—he will always live in my memory as if he had really been my father—Henry Logan, was in charge of all the machinery and plant at a large fish-packing firm. We lived comfortably and happily. Occasionally Dr. Beamish would come up north and stay with us for a day or two. All I knew was that he and my parents had been friends for many years. They both held him in the highest esteem and respect. Whenever he came he always brought something good for me, and he never left without giving me a sovereign for my money-box. He and I went for walks and fishing excursions together. We were great chums.

"The old gentleman always steered our talks towards the study of medicine, and he was for ever telling me of the wonderful discoveries that would be made in my time, in what he used to call 'the science of the mind.' He

himself had gone deeply into neuro-hypnology. Whenever he came up he had some new experience to relate—phenomena relating to somnambulism, hypnosis, post-hypnosis, and so on.

"Naturally, when the time arrived for me to declare my views about a career, I plumped for being a doctor.

"I graduated at the Edinburgh University; then I walked the wards at Guy's. While I was at Guy's my father died, and my mother followed him six weeks later. My father's will astonished me. I was left a certain sum of money, more than I had ever hoped for, and strict instructions to apply to Dr. Beamish with a view to becoming his assistant.

"My old friend agreed that I was to come to Manchester and take over his practice, gradually, as soon as I had completed my course at the hospital. About Christmas-time last year I joined him here.

"The very first day I arrived Dr. Beamish fell ill. He said he didn't want to hamper me with the presence in the house of a sick old man, and insisted on going into a nursing home at Southport.

"One of my first professional visits was to the house of Mr. Unwin, to attend his wife. It was then that I met Miss Unwin, and from that moment I knew . . . that I loved her.

"It was easy to see, however, that she was not very favorably impressed with me. Somehow she made me feel small, withered up. Tact isn't my strong point. In her presence I felt awkward, everything I did to create a good impression had the opposite effect. I cursed myself for a lout . . . and worshiped in silence. . . . I hope you understand."

Marquis nodded reassuringly.

Dr. Logan resumed his tale:

"Mr. Unwin and I got on admirably. I had always been keen on machinery, and when he let me into his secrets I found my brain running constantly towards a solution of his little mechanical problems.

"I had no friends here. The old gentleman—Dr. Beamish—was still away. I put in all my spare time with Mr. Unwin at the workshop. In the end we hit on an idea that proved practicable and profitable. He insisted on

my sharing at the royalties. In short, we became partners; my share, of course, being much smaller than his—as was only fair.

"Shortly after Dr. Beamish's death I received instructions from his solicitor to apply to the bank for certain articles and papers left in their charge for me.

"The papers are those on the table there. You know as much about them as I do. The other articles—mostly clothing—are upstairs.

"The terms of the will were—briefly—to the effect that if, after reading the story of my birth and of my mother's suffering, I decided to claim reparation from my real father—William Fayle—which would mean revealing my identity—the whole of Dr. Beamish's estate would pass to a charitable institution. If, on the other hand, I decided, within one year of the old gentleman's death, to attach the name of Beamish to my own, the estate would pass to me *in toto*.

"There was another course open to me—to let the whole thing slide: to take no step one way or the other—to let the estate go to charity.

"As a bachelor, with all my responsibilities under my own hat, I am well enough off as it is. The installments I have to pay every year to the trustees for the practice are absurdly small, and not at all commensurate with the accruing profits. So long as I have health and strength to carry on my work I shall be comfortably off . . . as regards money.

"But I could not give up hope of . . . of . . . marrying . . . and marrying meant . . . Miss Unwin . . . Anne.

"And if I thought of marriage I must also consider the probable views of my future wife regarding finances.

"Dr. Beamish's estate has not yet been proved, but I understand the gross value will not be less than twenty thousand pounds.

"My Scottish training made me consider. I tried to bring myself to tell Anne I loved her, but I could never face the ordeal. And all the time she was just driving me crazy . . one can't explain . . . not properly. . . .

"One day, quite recently, I dropped a few hints to her father—poor fellow. He saw what I was getting at and

let me understand that he approved. Then I began to wonder what he would say if he knew my real story.

"The character of William Fayle, as Dr. Beamish draws it in those papers, is hardly what one would boast about in one's father; but I felt I must not conceal anything. Then again . . .

"I determined, after much mental travail, to let him read the papers for himself—to judge whether or not he would care to risk me—*me*, with William Fayle's blood in my veins, and the possibility of William Fayle's cruelty in my heart—as a mate for his daughter.

"A week ago I left the papers with him. He and his brother-in-law, Mr. Whittaker, were joint trustees under Dr. Beamish's will. I told him why I was letting him have sight of the documents unbeknown to his fellow-trustee—because I wished his formal consent to my speaking to Anne, and I preferred him to know everything.

"Until that moment, I swear solemnly, I had no idea that Anne was inclined to bestow her affections on any man, nor, I am positive, had her father any idea. I did not even know that she and Ernest Fayle were acquainted. . . .

"Mr. Unwin took the documents and promised to read them carefully. Two days after—on the Thursday of last week—he begged me to be patient. He was considering the matter, and he would let me have a straightforward 'yes' or 'no' within a few days.

VI

"On Saturday, as you know, we had the good fortune to dispose of an option on our latest machine for fifteen hundred pounds. During the negotiations Mr. Unwin threw out one or two humorous hints that Anne would not think the less of my suit on account of my share in the profits. I began to pat myself on the back—to flatter myself that my fears were groundless, that I would soon have Mr. Unwin's consent to my approaching his daughter.

"I left the workshop before he took the experts to tea and I returned, at his request, at eight-thirty, to find the place in darkness and the door locked. I came straight

here to my patients whom I had left waiting. Almost immediately—I had just finished with the first patient, an accident case—Anne called and asked me to attend a fever case in Longsight. Imagine my surprise when she told me the patient's name—*Fayle!*

"At first I was stupid enough to think her father had told her everything and that she had mentioned the name as a sort of joke. But I saw she was serious and impatient. I had never heard of this young Fayle. In any case there are other Fayles. I asked her if he was related to the brickmaking Fayles. He was—the youngest son. And, for some reason I can't fathom, she seemed angry with me. As though she knew it would hurt me to the quick, she told me she intended to marry him. Him! Imagine . . .

"Is it possible to conceive a more hideous tangle? What fateful affinities, motives, and counter-motives had brought about the unthinkable situation? Not only was this illegitimate son of my mother's persecutor usurping my birthright—he was about to snatch my one hope of happiness in life—the love of the sweet lady I longed to call wife.

"My gorge rose. If ever man felt the urge to destroy I did as I sat in this very room that night. But my training had schooled me to self-control. I confess to you, Mr. Marquis, for the next few minutes, after Anne left, I experienced an almost irresistible impulse to rush into my dispensary and mix myself a potion that would put an end to my heartache for ever . . . to quell the fury of my blood . . . to kill myself. . . .

"And I appreciate your understanding enough also to confess that I went on my knees and prayed for the faith I had lost, to carry me through my Gethsemane.

"How I got through my consultations I do not know.

"I bit my lips and kept repeating to myself: 'Do your job—do your job. You're a healer of the sick before you're a private individual with a heart to break. Never mind your heart. Keep your mind on your duty. Do your job. *Do your job.*' I kept repeating that . . . I was going mad.

"I went up in the tram. The fog was like a wall. We just crawled along. And all the time I was haunted by

the fear . . . suppose he died before I got there? At all costs I must save this man—the chosen mate of the girl I would willingly die for. In saving him I would be destroying all my own chances of happiness. I felt sublimated—exalted above reason itself. . . . I wonder if you can understand?

"It was as though a sacred flame lit me up to finer sensibilities, to realizations of an inner strength surpassing all previous experience—to a spiritual contentment transcending the highest conception of happiness. . . . One can hardly explain. Those moments never repeat themselves. . . .

"I groped my way to the house where I was to meet this man—this half-brother—lover of my sweet lady.

"It was true. His condition was critical. Temperature about as high as it's possible for an adult to endure, and live. As I looked down on that fever-laden body, as I listened to his delirious ravings, I forgot all my resentment—all my jealousy. Once more I was the professional healer. Here again was my skill challenged. Here was suffering—to be relieved, life to be saved . . . the life of a blood-brother.

"I applied certain remedies I had brought and promised to return at the hour I anticipated would be the worst for my patient—just before dawn. Anne determined to nurse him through the night, so that his mother would be able to rest and be better fitted to take her turn next day.

"Returning here I found the note calling me to attend to Florrie Radcliffe's baby, and when I got back again from that case there was your message demanding my presence at Apsley House. Truly that night seemed an eternity of hell—tragedy and horror at every step. . . . I have not been to bed since Friday night.

"When I left you at Apsley House I went round to Back Coldacre and ordered a cab for a quarter to five, came back here, bathed, changed, and then spent the remainder of the time in my dispensary preparing the medicines due for my young messenger to deliver in the morning.

"Then the cab came and I went to see the patient.

"Anne opened the door to me at the Fayles' lodgings. She looked pale and worn out. I dared not tell her of the

terrible affair at her home. She told me the patient had passed a fairly good night. Ernest Fayle woke as we stood by his bedside, so I sent Anne downstairs while I made a thorough examination. I diagnosed scarlet fever. Then I went downstairs and gave Anne a soothing draught. I wanted her to get some sleep before learning of her father's death. She lay down on the sofa, tucked up in a rug. I went into the lobby for an overcoat to put over her feet, picked one from the pegs, returned to the sitting-room, and spread it over her. Something slipped out of one of the pockets on to the hearth-rug. It was a revolver; five of the chambers were loaded with live cartridges. The remaining cartridge had been discharged.

"The discovery set me thinking. Could it be related to my partner's murder? Then again . . . how could it?

"In the lobby, at the foot of the stairs, almost, I stumbled over a pair of boots—men's and of an unusual size.

"Obviously the boots belonged to either William Fayle or his son. I crept upstairs to my patient's room and compared the boots with several others I found at the bottom of a clothes-closet. Those I had taken from the lobby were twice the size of those in the closet.

"To whom then belonged the overcoat?

"I returned to the sitting-room where Anne was sleeping and overhauled the garment. Undoubtedly it belonged to a very big man—to a man bigger, much bigger, than myself, and in the inner breast pocket I found an envelope addressed to William Fayle. The post-office stamp mark showed that it had been posted on the Fourth of November.

"The envelope was empty.

"But what froze my heart was this: *the address was in the handwriting of my partner—Arthur Unwin.*

VII

"Over Anne's feet I placed another overcoat from the lobby and hung up the incriminating garment where I had found it, leaving the revolver in the pocket.

"I took the boots into the kitchen, daubed the soles

with a mixture of soot, soap and water, and made an impression of each sole on a sheet of brown paper. Then I cut out the impressions with scissors, waited till they were quite dry and put them in my bag.

"Later in the morning I ascertained from Mrs. Fayle that her husband had returned home very late. From the way she spoke, and the way she hurriedly changed the subject, I presumed there had been some unpleasantness.

"I hung about the house on the chance of seeing this William Fayle. Presently I caught him on the landing, on his way to the bathroom. I entered into conversation —about his son's illness. He seemed indifferent and preoccupied. I noticed his breath was reminiscent of spirits . . . a brute of a man . . . and my father!

"Eventually Anne woke up, and by a few indirect inquiries I gathered that William Fayle had returned very late and very drunk.

"You say I was observed comparing the footprints in the workshop on Sunday night. I went there when I judged the coast would be clear, let myself in with my own key, and investigated every mark on the floor. There was no doubt at all about the shape and impressions of the footmarks. *William Fayle had been in that workshop.*

"Why had Mr. Unwin written to William Fayle? Why had William Fayle visited the workshop? Why should William Fayle carry a revolver?

"It seemed very possible that the tragedy had been brought about, indirectly, through the bundle of documents I had left with Mr. Unwin—the papers bequeathed to me by Dr. Beamish.

"I searched the desk. They were not there. Mr. Unwin had once shown me a secret drawer at the back of the desk. I searched that, and again I drew a blank.

"Yesterday morning—under the excuse of looking for the will—I went through Mr. Unwin's papers at the house, without any luck.

"In the evening, after my consultations in the surgery here, I went up to Kirkmanshulme Lane in my brougham, on the flimsy excuse that I intended to disinfect the room that my patient had occupied before being sent off to the hospital—a pretext to get into the house, to look around.

As the brougham went along the lane I noticed two men talking together under a gas-lamp. One of them was unknown to me, but the other I recognized immediately as Detective Tennant, whom I had met at Apsley House on the night of the murder . . . you remember?

"Naturally I concluded they were on the look-out for William Fayle.

"The landlady let me into the house and was pleased when I told her I had brought the disinfectants. Mr. and Mrs. Fayle were in the sitting-room. I suggested I should spray some of the stuff I had brought in their bedroom.

"They made no objection, and I went upstairs alone.

"I searched everywhere for those papers, but not a trace could I find. After disinfecting all the other rooms, and prying into every likely hiding-place, I tackled Mr. and Mrs. Fayle's bedroom. Before lighting the gas I peeped through the window and, as I had suspected, saw your two men sauntering about in the lane, separately and without acknowledging each other as they crossed. The moonlight enabled me to see them quite distinctly.

"I hunted quickly through the room and sprinkled the disinfectant about. When I returned to the sitting-room Mr. Fayle was just going out. I hurried into my brougham and ordered the driver to return to the surgery —in a loud voice so that your men would hear.

"William Fayle was walking towards Stockport Road. Through the back window of the brougham I saw your two men following him at a safe distance, one on each side of the road. I changed my silk hat for a tweed cap that I keep in one of the door-pockets of the brougham for occasional use, and after turning the Stockport Road corner I got out, leaving my overcoat, silk hat and black bag inside.

"I told the coachman I was going for a bit of a walk round, and ordered him to leave my things at the surgery before going to the stables. When he drove off I waited in a garden near the corner until I saw William Fayle turn up towards Levenshulme, followed by your men, and as they shadowed him, I shadowed them.

"The rest I presume you know. I left William Fayle on the railway embankment, and with his hat and over-

coat on I led your fellows across country until I came to the canal near Reddish. There I hid amongst some coal on a barge, watched the detectives pass over the bridge, and until they vanished far beyond in the direction of the old mills. Then I cut off along the canal to Hyde Road, and so back here."

VIII

After Dr. Logan had related his story, Marquis sat for a long time silently stroking his beard. He spoke at last, gravely, sympathetically.

"Here's a case, doctor, where duty leads one way and personal inclination the other. I'm afraid I must take those papers and hand them over to the authority whose business it is to deal with court exhibits. But what I can do, to save unnecessary washing of dirty linen in public, I will. I'll put the case before the chief constable —one of the best in the world—and if he can persuade the Crown prosecutor that we have sufficient evidence to hang William Fayle apart from the evidence of those papers, it might be arranged that they be kept in reserve and only used if absolutely necessary. But of course I cannot hold out any definite hope. One never knows from what angle these lawyers will attack. After all, your evidence will be a matter for your own conscience to dictate. You know what the law demands—the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth."

Long after the detective had departed, Dr. Logan paced his surgery floor with that refrain jingling rhythmically in his brain:

"The truth. The *whole* truth,
And nothing *but* the truth."

And nothing but the truth!

CHAPTER V

I

IN the stuffy, overcrowded coroner's court, Polly Whittaker sat among a miscellaneous assembly of spectators, on the first raised bench behind the press desks. All day the case went on with the usual one-hour interval for lunch. Many witnesses were called. The solicitor for the Crown—a bland gentleman with a moon-like face and a very shiny high collar—pumped, probed, and prodded nearly all of them to the verge of hysteria; and he was very polite to the jury.

The policeman, who had first been fetched by Eli Garside's cabman, intoned his evidence with cast-iron firmness: "On the night of the fifth instant, at five minutes past nine, during my hours of duty on the beat . . . etc. . . ."

An aged doctor from Ardwick Green testified that when he inspected the body at the instigation of Eli Garside, about nine-thirty, life was extinct. The heart had apparently bled internally until pressure on the pericardium had automatically stopped the organ. Blood at the orifice of the wound was congealed. *Rigor mortis* had commenced, the lower limbs being quite stiff. Death had been caused by a bullet wound. Witness could not say definitely how long the body had been dead. . . .

Would it be, say, two hours?

It might have been dead two hours.

Could it have been dead, say, only half an hour?

It might have been only half an hour, but, judging by the viscidity of the blood about the wound, witness would be inclined to believe that more than half an hour had passed.

An hour then?

Well . . . perhaps an hour would be nearer the mark.

Hardly less?

Hardly.

And not more than two hours?

Witness felt safe in saying under two hours.

Between one and two hours then?

Yes.

Could the solicitor for the Crown take it definitely that the body had been dead more than one hour?

Well . . . yes . . . more than one hour.

Say an hour and a quarter, approximately?

Approximately . . . well . . . between an hour and an hour and a half.

"Thank you." The solicitor for the Crown bowed gracefully and sat down.

Another solicitor jumped up. He was watching on behalf of two of the witnesses—Samuel Unwin, son of the deceased, and John Davis, both of whom had been summoned to appear. He (the watching solicitor) would like witness (the aged doctor) to clear the air about the time. Witness had examined the body at nine-thirty. Was that correct?

"About nine-thirty."

"What do you mean, *about?*"

"It was nine-thirty by my watch."

"Does your watch keep good time?"

"Yes."

"Then we can say nine-thirty exactly?"

"Er . . . yes . . . I think I am safe in saying nine-thirty."

"So that death must have occurred at some time between eight and half-past?"

"Approximately. That is my opinion."

"Thank you."

The watching solicitor sat down, and the press men scribbled furiously. The coroner held up the proceedings while he wrote—speaking each word out distinctly: "My opinion is that death occurred between eight and eight-thirty." The coroner looked perkily at the doctor over his glasses. "That's what you said, isn't it? You *said* that?"

The doctor agreed.

The coroner smacked his lips.

Eli Garside was called. A policeman at the door of the waiting-room barked: "Eli Garside," and in the remote distance another voice called: "E. I. Casson."

Mr. Garside was inclined to tell more than he was asked.

The coroner rebuked him.

"Come now," went on the Crown solicitor, "try and tell the jury the exact words the deceased said when you entered the workshop before eight o'clock. You say he told you he expected a visitor. Exactly what did he say?"

Mr. Garside tried to lean gracefully on the front of the box. He found it too high. Witness-boxes are contrived in such a fashion as to make an average-sized person feel uncomfortable. If the boxes were only six inches lower, one could adopt pulpit attitudes. But they're not, so one can't. One feels mured-up, ridiculously small. If you put your hands on the front ledge you look as if you're begging for mercy. If you try a dignified leaning attitude, you appear to be lolling contemptuously. Anyway, you feel foolish and guilty.

Mr. Garside stopped trying to lean and stood bolt upright, fingering his face, feeling very silly; and then again, that lawyer chap wouldn't let a fellow get a word out . . . nasty sort of fellow, that lawyer.

"Come now. What did he say? The exact words?"

"Well, it's like this. I pops me 'ead inside, like it might be . . ."

"What did he *say?*"

"Well . . . I seen 'im sittin' in the corner, so . . ."

The coroner rapped his desk with his ink-pot and thrust a nasty chin at Eli.

"Will you confine yourself to the question?" he bawled. "Tell the jury the words he used."

Eli's pop eyes roamed pathetically, helplessly round the court. Sickening disturbances were taking place in his interior. Faces swam before him. He seemed to be sliding downhill. A loud hiccough burst from him. People at the back of the court giggled and tittered. Eli made a frantic clutch at the ledge in front of him.

"Well . . . 'e said: 'Ha,' 'e says, 'it's you, is it?' 'e

says. 'I thort it was 'im as I was waitin' for,' 'e says."

Again the coroner dictated aloud to himself. "Ha! It's you. I thought it was him I was waiting for."

Nothing could be heard except the scratching of the coroner's quill pen, but an usher shouted "Silence in the court," and everybody coughed.

Later, Mr. Garside was requested to repeat the exact words that had been used by the rough-looking man whom he had caught banging at the workshop door earlier.

"Well . . . 'e swore sumpthin' *'orrible.*"

"What did he say?"

"Well . . . 'e says: 'The b. swine's kidnaped my b. kid.' That's what he said." Eli wagged his head in appreciation of his own skill in negotiating a tricky obstacle.

The coroner stretched his tortoise-like neck at Eli and inquired innocently: "Did he say *'b'*?"

"Yis, 'e did."

The coroner smiled playfully. "Come, come, not *b*—surely? There is no sense in saying 'b.' It's *silly* to say 'b.'"

"Well . . . 'e swore. I only *use* b . . . like."

The coroner put a hand behind his ear and leaned right over at Eli.

"Come now," he commanded, "don't be so mealy-mouthed. Tell the jury exactly. Don't say 'b.' Say the exact words."

A woman at the back made a half-hysterical shriek of delight. The jurors nudged each other.

Mr. Garside perspired profusely.

Mr. Garside gulped lumpily.

Mr. Garside squared himself and let them have it:

"'E said: 'The bloody swine's kidnaped my blasted kid.' *That's* what 'e said!"

And Mr. Garside winked daringly towards the spectators at the back. The wink meant: "There now—let him put *that* in his pipe and smoke it!"

Women's hats ducked and came up again. Everybody tried to suppress giggles.

The coroner glared in annoyance, surprised at the giggles.

The usher bawled "Silence!"

The coroner looked pained, as if about to burst into tears.

Comedy set in. Quite a jolly sort of inquest it was. One could imagine murderers going about and saying to their victims: "Now keep nice and quiet while I murder you; there'll be lots of fun at the inquest."

After Eli came Mrs. Radcliffe. She was the next witness, that is.

The point of the whole inquiry, it seemed, was the exact number of gins that Mrs. Radcliffe had consumed at the Red Bull in company with the witness Garside.

The coroner interrupted the cross-examination to put in:

"I take it you went there at the invitation of the man Garside? I see. I see. Just as *any* lady might. Yes, yes. I see." The coroner licked his chops and became agreeably interested, affable, appearing to take quite a fancy to Mrs. Radcliffe. He blew out his cheeks and then sucked them in again.

"And the witness Garside paid, I take it? Yes, yes, of course—as any gentleman would." He looked benignly at the press and then over his glasses at the jury.

Everybody loosened up.

So excruciatingly funny the thing became. The coroner was so mild, so innocent. He worked the thing up until he superimposed, on the imaginations of the spectators, the jolly picture of himself strolling into the Red Bull with Mrs. Radcliffe and standing her a small gin—"as any gentleman might."

Until the court adjourned for lunch it was one of the most amusing auditions ever sat through. No one would think it had anything to do with murder.

And the way the coroner pronounced the word "luncheon" made one think of roast beef and Yorkshire pudding, and Brussels sprouts, and bitter beer in a tankard.

Coroners are so often face to face with death that they can toy with the idea of murder and indulge in imaginary drinks at hypothetical public-houses, both at the same time, without losing an interest in mealtimes.

Habit—that's what it is.

Polly Whittaker didn't feel at all hungry.

II

The coroner returned after lunch with a sort of brisk, bustling business-like air. He opened the door behind his throne and darted suddenly into things. He whooped along. Comedy vanished. Proceedings came down to brass tacks. That coroner proved that he knew his job.

Chief-Detective-Inspector Marquis gave evidence briefly. Amongst other bits of telling testimony he brought to light the discovery of a bullet in the woodwork of the desk in the workshop. That bullet corresponded exactly with the remaining four in the revolver (Exhibit "D") that the witness Whittaker had sworn to as having contained only five cartridges at the time he (witness Whittaker) handed it to the deceased during the afternoon of the fifth instant.

Police-Sergeant Donovan swore to a patched-up document (Exhibit "G") as being made-up of the torn scraps of a letter that he had picked up on the evening of the fifth instant in Higher Ardwick, just outside the entrance to Back Coldacre. He also swore to seeing a big man coming out of Back Coldacre at eight-twenty p.m. The big man was mumbling to himself. Witness had caught the words: *"Shoot him like a dog."* The big man hesitated as he came out of the mews, as if undecided which way to go. Eventually he had turned to the right towards Devonshire Street. He was still mumbling. It was then witness saw him tear up a letter and scatter the pieces. With the aid of his lantern witness had picked up the pieces, having nothing else to do while waiting for the constable on the beat.

Could witness identify the big man?

Witness could. The big man was William Fayle.

But the night had been foggy?

Agreed, but the fog rolled and some places were clearer than others. In the light of the red lamp over the entrance to Back Coldacre witness had easily recognized William Fayle—an exceptionally big man, well known. Witness had known William Fayle by sight for about twenty years—ever since William Fayle had appeared as a witness in the case of the Fenian attack on the prison van—the time when Sergeant Brett had been murdered.

William Fayle had been in the public eye as the captor of the Fenian Allin who was afterwards hanged.

Ah! The court let out its breath. This was something *like*. This was drama. More! More! Keep it up! Real blood this!

Sergeant Donovan admitted that he was Irish.

The coroner muttered: "Yes, yes . . . Irish . . . I understand," forgivingly, paternally.

Dr. Logan was called.

The solicitor for the Crown handed up a note to the coroner.

The coroner said: "Yes, yes, quite. I understand."

That coroner understood all sorts of things.

The solicitor for the Crown became facetious. Was he right in guessing that witness was something of an amateur detective? But the solicitor for the Crown had had it from no less an authority than the chief detective. Witness had rendered valuable service. Footprints! Ah!

The brown paper cuttings—impressions! (Exhibit "K.") Witness had been clever. But had witness been wise? One could be too clever, too zealous. . . . Moonface became very bland.

The revolver? Yes, witness identified it. He had accidentally discovered it in an overcoat pocket.

Was this the overcoat? (Exhibit "I.")

It was.

Dr. Logan was tense, pale, clutching at the sides of the box. But what he feared didn't happen. The bundle of papers left by the late Dr. Beamish was not referred to.

William Fayle. He was accompanied by two stalwart policemen, dwarfing them, towering above those red-necked giants. He set his eyes on the window opposite the witness box and answered simply in a dull, level voice.

The sympathy of the court was not for William Fayle.

Could he give an account of what had happened on the night of the fifth instant?

He could. He did, to a certain extent. . . .

He had left his lodgings in the evening about six o'clock, walked about, called at the Devonshire Hotel, had a drink.

Perhaps more than one—perhaps six or seven?

Perhaps.

What sort of drinks?

Didn't remember.

If the landlord of the Devonshire were to swear on oath that he had personally served witness with over a dozen large whiskies, would the landlord be committing perjury?

Witness didn't remember the number of drinks.

Police-Sergeant Donovan swears he saw witness coming out of Back Coldacre at eight-twenty. Is that true?

"Yes . . . I suppose so . . . I can't remember . . ."

"Is this your revolver?" (Exhibit "J.")

"Yes."

"Will you tell the court how long you have had this weapon in your possession?"

Witness had bought it at a shop in Market Street on the morning of the fifth instant.

Ah . . . The court leaned forward and craned its neck.

"I put it to you that you bought this weapon with the deliberate intention of killing Arthur Wellington Unwin."

"I did!"

Sensation. Everybody gasped. Everybody had known it all along.

"I put it to you that you *did* kill him."

"I cannot remember."

And to all other questions concerning the witness's movements on the night of the fifth, the answer was the same: "I cannot remember." Stolidly he stuck to that. He was not represented by solicitor or counsel.

The evidence of Sam Unwin and Humpy Davis, as drawn out by the solicitor for the Crown and the watching solicitor, resolved itself into emotional "sob-stuff." The press worked up a terrific "heart-punch."

The unfortunate son, returning home after being given up as dead—drowned in the wreck of the ill-fated *Mary Queen of Scots*—starving, unwilling to let his sorrowing parents see him in his miserable condition, resorts to the expedient of breaking into his own home for food. He cooks it in his own father's workshop. The awful discovery of the tragedy—the finding of his father's body. . . .

Women wept copiously. Men sniffed. The jury looked sad.

The servant Alice mistook the voice of the son for the voice of the father. Witness had testified to the likeness between the voices of father and son—a family likeness of timbre and intonation. Over a speaking tube one might easily mistake one for the other—easily.

After five o'clock the coroner speeded things up still more. Minor witnesses were rushed through.

Then the Crown solicitor turned his moonlike face on the jury and said unpleasant things about "that brutish monster"—meaning William Fayle.

And the coroner referred to his notes and told the jury how careful they must be. They must consider first the possibility of suicide, remote though it appeared. Then accidental death. There had been extraordinary cases in the past. This was not a trial for murder—merely an inquest on a dead body. It was for them to take the responsibility of deciding how deceased had met his death. If they *should* decide amongst themselves that deceased had been murdered, they must indicate, if possible, by whom. If the evidence they had investigated persuaded them that Arthur Wellington Unwin had been the victim of deliberate assault, with intent to kill, they must declare a verdict of willful murder accordingly . . . but they must be careful and impartial. . . .

Special editions of the evening papers were lustily shrilled through the city streets almost as the spectators left the court, and, in the "stop press," purchasers read:

"Back Coldacre Mystery.

"Jury return verdict without leaving box.

"Willful Murder.

"William Fayle committed for trial on coroner's warrant.

CHAPTER VI

I

LIFE goes on.

Within a fortnight of her father's burial Anne found herself caught up once more by work-a-day routine.

The children at school whispered among themselves:

"Miss Anne's all in black."

"An' isn't she pale?"

"She's been at a buryin'."

They brought her little presents—cakes that mothers had made—flowers (which Anne kept in a glass vase on her desk)—a pathetic little fern in a plantpot—things like that.

For a few days the children were remarkably well-behaved, attentive, anxious to show sympathy. But only for a few days. Then the black dress and the pale cheeks were accepted as normal, and things went on as before—bickerings about the ownership of pen-nibs, naughts and crosses surreptitiously indulged in under the desk, foot-scraping, sniffing, spiteful traps with bent pins cunningly placed for unsuspecting sitters. Children are like that—so are adults. They soon accept abnormal as normal. Habit counts.

Anne discovered, rather resentfully, that her father's death did not destroy her sense of humor, nor her appetite, nor her interest in books, nor her desire to write stories, nor her inclination to play with the kiddies. The earth still revolved.

Sorrow—the sorrow that we know on losing a loved one—is like a cloud; for a time it obscures all light, all hope; then it condenses and becomes a matter of regrets—drenching like rain; and in time it crystallizes into

something portable and very beautiful—as a diamond—an adoring memory.

And life goes on—hurting, soothing, tempering; life goes on.

Mrs. Unwin recovered gradually—her boy had come home, as she had always known he would.

Mr. Waddington sent for Sam and interviewed him for the duration of a whole afternoon at the office in Dickinson Street. What transpired at that meeting was never afterwards mentioned.

Sam learned that there are harder things to bear than the pressure of gambling debts—for instance, to quote one: unqualified forgiveness.

He was reinstated in his former position at the house of Thomas Waddington, Sons & Co., manufacturers and merchants; just as if he had only been away on a long holiday. Friend Humpy Davis was given a job in the packing warehouse.

And things went on very much in the same old way.

The father of young George Washington was interviewed in Strangeways Jail by Dr. Logan and a solicitor, and was prevailed upon to sign his consent to young George's being properly cared for, treated and educated, at a deaf and dumb school in Cheshire.

And life went on. . . .

II

Early in December William Fayle was brought before the stipendiary magistrate at the Minshull Street Police Court; a *prima facie* case was established and the prisoner retained for trial at the assizes.

During the police court trial, the letter that William Fayle was alleged to have torn up as he left Back Coldacre on the night of the murder, and which had been reassembled later by Chief-Detective-Superintendent Marquis, was read out in court. The reconstructed letter—augmented by scrappy gleanings from the deceased's blotting-pad, and the result articulated into coherent verisimilitude by the imaginary links that Marquis had added—read (Marquis's imaginary interpositions are in italics):

"Apsley House,
"Ardwick,
"Manchester,
"*November* 4, 1887.

"Dear Sir,

"It has come *to my notice that your* son, Mr. Ernest Fa*yle, has for some consi*derable time been paying attention to my daughter. *I have no reason to b*elieve that his intentions are not honorable, but *I have in* my possession certain documentary evidence whi*ch renders the possibility of* a nearer relationship, than exists at *present between your* son and my daughter, definitely out of the *question so far as* my consent is concerned. The *evidence I hold re*lates to certain of your *own acts and proves co*nclusively that your *son Ernest was born* out of wedlock.

"It is not my *wish to hurt either* you or your son. I would *submit, therefore, that it* might be to your *interest to favor* me with a personal visit to this address, with a view *to our discussing a m*eans of bringing about an end to an intolerable situa*tion without causing undue p*ain to either of the parties chiefly involved.

"I shall be *at liberty* to receive you at eight o'clock *tomorrow evening* (*Sa*turday) at my workshop *in Back Coldacre,* Higher Ardwick. For your guidance, *Back Col*dacre is a mews and my *workshop* is at the far end on the right.

"*For reasons which I* am sure you will appreciate, I would *like this* matter to *be settled immedi*ately, but if the above suggested *appointment be* not agreeable to *you I shall* be willing to meet you elsewhere at *your convenience.*

"I *am de*ar Sir,
"*Yours* truly,
"A. W. Unwin."

III

One evening Dr. Logan called professionally on Mrs. Unwin. Before leaving he tapped on the door of the study where Anne was writing.

He showed her a telegram.

"Is it true?" Anne asked, after reading the message.

"Yes. I saw him yesterday. It's a most extraordinary case. He's recovered several times apparently—then, just as they think they're getting him round, down he goes again worse than ever. They wouldn't send me that wire if they thought he would rally again. I'm afraid it's the end."

Anne read the message again and then asked: "I suppose I couldn't go? I mean they wouldn't let me see him?"

"I can arrange it. That's why I came. I was hoping you would like to see him . . . for the last time."

"Could we go now? This time of night; so late?"

"Yes. My brougham's outside."

"I'll go."

"I thought you would," said Dr. Logan with his peculiar wry smile.

IV

At the Monsall Fever Hospital a young doctor, a former college chum of Logan's, took them through the park-like grounds to the acute-ward where Ernest was lying. As a result of Dr. Logan's influence Ernest had been treated apart, in a single-bedded room attached to one of the many communal wards.

The young doctor glanced at the patient's routine card hung up above the bed.

"Look," he whispered to Dr. Logan, pointing to the temperature chartings, "gone down wallop again since we wired you. Only ninety-nine now. But he's been going on like that all the time. Never seen anything like it. It beats me."

Dr. Logan examined the chart. "Of course, you know, he ought to be under observation all the time." He pointed to the peaky zigzags. "There must be a real cause for all this."

"That's just it," agreed the young doctor. "He *ought* to be watched all the time. But what can we do? We're under-staffed as it is. Every blessed ward chock full. There's one night nurse on duty now, for two big wards and this special case—nearly seventy patients. It's im-

possible, you know. And in the daytime there's one nurse and two probationers to each ward, and one sister supervising four wards."

Anne was looking at the tortured body on the bed.

This writhing, red skeleton was Ernest!

She turned pleadingly to the young doctor.

"Couldn't something be done? Oh! Surely, surely there must be some way, some drug . . ."

The young doctor shook his head.

"Impossible! He must have had unusual vitality to have resisted so long. But there's no chance now; not an earthly. Look—look! Look at this." He uncovered an arm—a mere bone covered with scarlet-flecked skin. "What can you do?"

For a long time Anne stood looking down at what remained of Ernest.

"We must go now," said Dr. Logan. "Come."

As they drove back to Ardwick Anne asked: "Does his mother know?"

And Dr. Logan answered: "His mother's gone."

"Gone where?"

"Nobody seems to know. She's taken all her luggage with her; that's all Mrs. Horrip knows. She's just vanished."

V

But, in spite of everything, Ernest recovered.

Within a fortnight of Anne's visit he was placed in the long communal acute-ward, in a bed next to the only other adult patient—a butcher. He grew strong enough to take bread and milk, then, later, rice pudding, then fish, then chicken: finally he was charted for normal diet. Twice daily his throat was sprayed with an antiseptic fluid, red stuff, the same bowl of fluid and the same syringe being made to serve all the other patients—all little boys with the exception of the butcher.

Dr. Logan kept in touch with the authorities at the hospital and reported daily progress to Anne.

"Of course," he said, "he knows nothing of the . . . about his father. No newspapers are allowed in the wards, and the nurses have been warned against letting

him know what has happened. He's weak, terribly weak, and it'll be a long time before they allow him to leave his bed. They tell me he has received two letters from his mother. She appears to have gone over to France; the letters had the Paris postmark. The sister in charge of the ward is afraid he might have a relapse if he worries. . . ."

A battle raged between Anne's reason and her conscience.

Reason said: "This man's father murdered *your* father: you must forget this man, this Ernest."

Conscience said: "Ernest is still in danger. Worry might bring about his death. No matter what his father has done *he* is innocent. He is ignorant of the tragedy. He is suffering. He looks to you for sympathy."

To Dr. Logan, Anne said: "I had better go to see him on visitors' day. When is it?"

"It's on Saturday, between two and four; if you like I'll take you along in the brougham. But I think you ought not to wear black; it would set him wondering."

And so Anne wore a non-mourning costume when she and Dr. Logan visited Monsall Hospital on the Saturday.

They were allowed to look through a glass-paneled door into the ward. Ernest was propped up in bed, a third of the way down the ward. The nurse pointed out his visitors. Anne and the doctor waved and smiled. Ernest waved back.

The visitors were only allowed five minutes at the window: after that they had to make way for fathers and mothers and brothers and sisters of the little boy patients.

Anne was profoundly touched. After leaving a bunch of roses with the nurse, Anne and the doctor walked back through the grounds to the waiting carriage.

"You mustn't bother to bring me next Saturday," she told him. "I'll get Polly to come up with me on the tram. We'll come every week till he's discharged. Then Polly can tell him about . . . what has happened, and I'll see him once—to say good-by. It isn't his fault, but when he knows everything he'll understand. . . ."

VI

It was not until January that Ernest was allowed to walk about the hospital grounds. His ward mate—the butcher—had been granted outdoor recreation for several weeks when Ernest, muffled up and wearing a thick overcoat that had been sent from his lodgings by Dr. Logan, joined him one cold, but sunny, afternoon for an hour's exercise; a gentle stroll along the paths and terraces.

Every fine afternoon Ernest was allowed out in the gardens. Gradually strength and stamina returned, the adventure of the afternoon walk lost its excitement and became part of the routine. He tried to forget his boredom, playing halfpenny "nap" and "banker" behind the mortuary with the butcher and several men from other wards, taking his turn with the others at "keeping nix" —watching out for stray officials who might "turn nasty" if the card games were discovered.

Most of the adult patients were working men and shopkeepers, and their conversation was chiefly about football matches and steeplechasing. When the talk was not about sport it was about their own cases. They discussed tricks for outwitting the doctors, to bring about an early discharge.

Patients were examined with a view to discharge every Monday and Thursday. Clean throats and smooth-soled feet were accepted indices of a complete cure. No patient could hope to be liberated until the old skin of his feet had peeled off.

One man believed in soaking his feet in hot water, until they were parboiled, and anointing them with glycerin while the pores were still open. The chief difficulty lay in procuring the glycerin. If only he could get some glycerin!

Time dragged and Ernest fretted.

At last the glycerin enthusiast solved his problem. A small boy of the outer world, seen through the locked gate in a remote and little-frequented part of the gardens, had been found ready and willing to earn twopence. The enthusiast flourished his bottle of glycerin.

The other men traded with the small boy and tried the glycerin theory. Ernest sent the boy for a newspaper,

received it, and gave a standing order for a paper every day.

When Anne and Polly called the following Saturday they found Ernest dressed and able to walk about the ward. Conversation was impossible through the glass door. He just stood there, looking at them, and trying to convey meanings by elaborate pantomime.

The nurse reported excellent progress. He was getting quite strong again, but it might be several weeks yet before he could be liberated.

CHAPTER VII

I

THE trial by jury of William Fayle, on the charge of willful murder, was opened at the Manchester Assize Courts on Tuesday the Twenty-fourth day of January, 1888. The prisoner pleaded "Not guilty."

The Crown prosecutor was an eminent Q.C. famed for his dramatic victories, a glib speaker and an accomplished actor. His chief asset was an intuitive gift for sensing climax; he knew when to sit down.

In his opening address he told the jury of the necessity of capital punishment. There were those, he told them, who foolishly deprecated the practice of hanging proved murderers. The gentlemen of the jury had probably met that type, and what opinion could the gentlemen of the jury have arrived at concerning that weak-kneed, pusillanimous, spineless creature, other than that one would have of a crawling sand-worm? The gentlemen in the jury-box were hard-headed Lancashire men, men who knew their own minds, men who realized, as well as he did that, were it not for the threat of the scaffold, murder would be as common an offense as drunkenness and the perils of night would be increased a thousand-fold—too terrible to contemplate.

He would prove to them that the prisoner in the dock was not only a murderer but a *foul* murderer, a willful deliberate murderer, a man who plotted and planned with the avowed intention of killing in cold blood. The gentlemen of the jury had only to look at the prisoner to know what sort of brute they had to deal with. Was ever a man so branded with the sinister aspect of Cain. . . .

He drew a picture of the victim: "An elderly gentleman, white-haired, honest, God-fearing and respected of men; a gentleman of learning, a man of science, an inventor, devoting his life to the service of the world, freely

giving to his fellow-men the fruits of his talent, an ornament to the city of his birth, a Manchester man and a benefactor to the race—Arthur Wellington Unwin. At the very time of the presentation of his supreme masterpiece to mankind, at the psychological moment when the dreams and ambitions of his lifetime are consummated, when, after a career of unremitting toil, he realizes the achievement of fame and fortune; as he sits at his desk in his laboratory—the scene of his relentless endeavors throughout half a century—as he gazes at the wonderful machine, the child of his brain, that stamps his handiwork with the hall-mark of genius, he is cruelly *shot through the heart,* deliberately slaughtered; to quote the words of the assassin himself—the words of that, that vile creature who stands in the dock before you—*'shot like a dog.'*

"Yes, gentlemen, look. Look at the man—William Fayle—murderer. Ah—you turn your eyes away; and not without reason. There are eyes and ears other than those of our commonly accepted senses. There is an oversense—a sense that circumscribes and embraces all other senses—a delicate but truthful detector of good and evil, an intuitive faculty, within the heart of hearts, that is common to all humanity. Look—look at the murderer—the killer—and dare to tell me you do not believe the intuitive promptings of your own conscience. You are silent, gentlemen, you are silent because you cannot deny what your heart's-judgment tells you is true: that this man, this William Fayle, is a creature of bloody death-dealing—a slayer—a murderer in the sight of man and God.

"But you are not here to judge by instinct. You shall have proof, hard incontrovertible fact upon fact, undeniable testimony of sworn witnesses, the interdependency of truth and proof. When you know the complete story of this ghastly crime it will not be necessary for the honorable judge to hesitate before sentencing William Fayle to the hanging death, but it will be the duty of the police to protect the murderer from being torn limb from limb within this very court by the outraged auditors of his foul history. The verdict, gentlemen of the jury, is already in your hearts, on your lips. It will soon ring

in the assassin's ears. That verdict is: 'Guilty,' and William Fayle shall be hanged."

The court looked savagely at William Fayle.

II

The prisoner also was represented by a well-known Q.C. In turn he rose and told the jury his version of William Fayle's character. A man of sterling qualities, a hard-working man who had risen to a position of affluence and influence by dint of unflagging toil and business acumen, an honest maker of bricks and builder of houses, who had paid his way like a true Manchester man and who had the respect of all who knew him as being a sound citizen and a Christian. Counsel for the defense would prove to the court that this honest brickmaker was being made to run the gauntlet through pressure of evidence which was circumstantial at best and which would prove to be in every way fallacious.

Counsel for the defense would not bore the gentlemen of the jury with a lot of wishy-washy legal jargon, he would content himself with the promise that they should have the satisfaction of leaving the court with the knowledge that the honorable judge had acquitted this long-suffering Manchester man, with the promise that they would afterwards be shaking hands with William Fayle —exonerated and erect—knowing him to be like themselves—a reet 'un, a gradely chap, and in every way jannock.

The court fidgeted and felt rather sorry for William Fayle.

III

Police evidence was taken first.

Sergeant Donovan repeated his story of how he saw the prisoner leaving Back Coldacre, and of the subsequent picking up of the torn scraps of the letter.

Counsel for the defense cross-examined. Was witness positive that the prisoner had mumbled the words: "Shoot him like a dog?"

Witness was quite positive.

"He was mumbling, you say?"

"Yes."

"What do you mean by mumbling?"

"He was speaking to himself."

"Shouting?"

"No—speaking in a low voice."

"Mumbling! That means he was speaking indistinctly?"

"Yes."

"What else did he say?"

"I couldn't catch anything else."

"Ah! You couldn't catch anything else. He was mumbling. You didn't hear him say, for instance, *'It's a cold night and I don't like this fog'?"*

"I did not."

"He was walking as he was mumbling?"

"Yes, coming out of Back Coldacre."

"You saw him coming?"

"No, I didn't actually see him till he was under the gaslight, but I heard him coming."

"How far was prisoner from you when you heard him say: 'Shoot him like a dog'?"

"He must have been about half-way under the tunnel —about fifteen feet, I should reckon."

"And at about fifteen feet you couldn't see him, you were not able to hear any other words, and yet you swear you heard him say: 'Shoot him like a dog'?"

"Yes."

"You wrote it down in your book at the time?"

". . . No."

"You didn't consider it worth while to ask him what he was doing in Back Coldacre?"

"No." Sergeant Donovan coughed uneasily.

"You were not suspicious? Be careful now. Many people are in the habit of talking to themselves, especially old people, and particularly in the dark. Although you thought you heard him say: 'Shoot him like a dog,' you were not suspicious?"

"Not at the time."

"When did you report the finding of the torn letter?"

"On the evening of the Sixth of November."

"Ah! *After*—twenty-four hours after the murder?"

"About twenty hours after."

"And you reported the words: 'Shoot him like a dog' at the same time?"

"Yes."

"I put it to you, sergeant, that you would not have reported those words at all had you not known of the murder? Would you?"

"Well . . ."

"I put it to you that under the circumstances you made a mistake; that the words prisoner used were: 'I don't like this fog,' and that afterwards you *tried* to recall his mumblings with a view to connecting him with the tragedy, and you reported what you thought he *might* have said. You must admit that on a very foggy night, at fifteen feet distance, one might easily mistake the word 'fog' for 'dog.' Isn't that true?"

"It sounded like 'dog' to me."

"It *sounded* like 'dog'!" Counsel pushed his wig back and resumed his attack.

"Suppose it had been 'tog.' You could have mistaken 'dog' for 'tog,' couldn't you?"

"Oh, yes."

"You could mistake 'sog' for 'tog'?"

". . . Yes."

"And 'zog' for 'sog'?"

"Yes."

"Even 'zog' for 'fog'?"

"Yes."

"At a stretch then, it's possible to mistake 'fog' for 'dog'?"

"I suppose it *is* possible."

"There *is* a remote possibility, then, just the very slightest possibility, shall we say, that you only *thought* he said 'dog'?"

"Well . . . yes."

"You might have made a mistake. Remember the prisoner is on trial for his life. You *might* have made a mistake."

"Of course it is just possible. . . ."

"That answer will do."

Counsel for the defense sat down, smiling cynically.

Chief-Detective-Superintendent Marquis was called.

Again the various exhibits were produced: the brown-paper cuttings with the footmark impressions; the revolver which Marquis had taken from the prisoner on the night of his capture; the bullet which had been extracted from deceased's heart at the post-mortem examination, and which was exactly alike in size, shape and weight with the bullets found in the revolver taken from prisoner; the patched-up letter and the blotting-sheet from deceased's desk. Marquis was bombarded by both counsel and frequently questioned directly by the judge himself.

After luncheon other witnesses were called.

The landlord of the Devonshire Hotel swore that he had served prisoner with not less than twelve large whiskies between the hours of six-thirty and seven-thirty on the night of the murder.

The landlord of the Wagon and Horses Inn declared that prisoner had consumed at least four pints of old ale in the Wagon and Horses parlor on the morning of the Fifth of November between the hours of ten and eleven; and again, in the evening of the same day, prisoner had called in just before six o'clock and had consumed two large glasses of hot rum.

A waitress from a well-known hotel in Greenheys gave evidence to the effect that the prisoner had sat in the smoke-room, where she was serving, from about ten in the evening till closing-time, during which period he had ordered about a dozen large glasses of hot rum; and at closing-time he had persuaded her to sell him a bottle of old-vat Scotch whisky, which he had taken away with him.

A cab-driver from Greenheys claimed that prisoner sat in his cabin from eleven o'clock until after midnight, and that, during the hour, prisoner finished the bottle of whisky while waiting for a hansom-cab. Prisoner had offered witness a "go at the bottle," but witness was a teetotaler and had declined the invitation.

A hansom-cab driver alleged to having driven prisoner to the corner of Kirkmanshulme Lane. Prisoner was very unsteady on his legs as he got out of the cab. Witness had reason to remember prisoner because prisoner had refused to pay the fare and had offered to fight witness for the money. Witness drove his cab along

Kirkmanshulme Lane, following the prisoner, and saw him enter a certain house. Witness called next evening and received the amount of the fare without any bother, together with a half-crown tip.

Following several minor witnesses William Fayle was put into the witness-box on the morning of the second day of the trial. He stooped slightly and gazed around the court with the stupid expression of a half-stunned bull; occasionally he stroked his clean-shaven upper lip and his chin whiskers. Since the police-court trial his hair had whitened noticeably, there were hollows in his cheeks, and the soft flesh under his eyes was baggy and dark.

The prosecutor began: "I believe you have been married twice?"

"Yes."

"Your first wife's name was Lydia Quinn before you married her?"

"Yes."

"She presented you with four sons?"

"Yes."

"She was a good wife and a good mother?"

"Yes."

"It was her money that enabled you to set up in business for yourself as a master brickmaker?"

"Yes."

"I understand she was a hard-working woman. She kept house for you and looked after the four children without the help of a servant?"

"Yes."

"When she was about to present you with a fifth child, and was unable to cope with her usual household duties, a cousin of hers came to live at your house, ostensibly to help your wife. Is that so?"

"Yes."

"Your wife was thirty-three at the time?"

"About. I don't remember."

"I have here a copy of her birth certificate and also of her marriage certificate. It was in the year 1859 that the cousin appeared on the scene—wasn't it?"

"I believe it was."

"According to this birth certificate your first wife

would be thirty-three in 1859. I have also a copy of your second wife's birth certificate which makes her to have been only twenty in 1859. I understand that your second wife was the cousin of your first wife. Is that true?"

"Yes."

"When your first wife's cousin came to live with you and your wife in 1859 that cousin was a pretty woman of twenty—a very pretty woman."

"Yes."

"Now will you tell the jury how your first wife died?"

"She was found drowned."

"Found drowned in the River Dee near Chester?"

"Yes."

"According to evidence brought up at the inquest, the body was in a decomposed state and scarcely recognizable. I have that evidence before me. The only witnesses who identified the body were yourself and the pretty cousin who afterwards became your wife. That's true, isn't it?"

"Yes."

"According to police records, your wife had been missing for over a month before the body was discovered. Is that true?"

"Yes."

"According to coroner's records, the inquest on your first wife's death was held at Chester on the Twenty-sixth of October, 1859; and according to the certificate of marriage you wedded your first wife's cousin—Annabel Quinn—on the Fifth of November, 1859—*exactly ten days after the inquest on your first wife.* Have you anything to say about that?"

"No."

At this point the honorable judge addressed the prosecuting counsel: "Is this . . . all this . . . really necessary?"

"I assure your lordship it *is* necessary. I will be as brief as possible."

His lordship sighed and leaned back with a martyr-like resignation.

The prosecuting counsel picked up another paper and tapped it with his magnifying-glass as he interrogated the prisoner.

"This is another birth certificate. The birth certificate of your son, Ernest Fayle. He was born on the . . ." Counsel made great pantomime with his magnifying-glass. ". . . on the Twenty-sixth day of April, 1860. Let us work this thing out. You married your second wife on the Fifth of November, 1859."

Counsel checked the months off on his finger. "December, January, February, March, April. Your second wife presented you with a son then—*five months after marriage.* I put it to you that you knew your first wife's cousin was pregnant at the time of your first wife's disappearance."

Prisoner drew a hand across his clean-shaven upper lip, but did not speak.

"Come now," Counsel proceeded. "Did you know that Annabel Quinn was going to have a baby?"

"Yes."

"Before your first wife disappeared, you knew that?"

"Yes."

Counsel for the Crown pointed an accusatory forefinger at the prisoner. "I put it to you that when you identified the body at the inquest you knew that it was not the body of your first wife?"

Prisoner's mouth quivered and a stream of saliva trickled down his shaven chin into the encircling growth of whiskers.

Counsel continued, leaning forward and shaking his finger: "I put it to you that you deliberately lied—that you committed perjury—that you did it to save your neck. Answer! Was that body the body of your first wife or was it not?"

The prisoner shuddered, clutched at the sides of the box, stared—stared straight through the prosecuting counsel as though in a trance, and in a loud voice he cried:

"Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it."

The prosecutor raised his hand and then flung it out towards the prisoner.

"Your conscience pricks you. You are on oath. Answer the question. Was that body the body of your first wife or was it not?"

William Fayle continued staring, and intoned, like a priest: "Except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain."

Relentlessly the prosecutor hung on to his point: "You are on oath. You are speaking with your God as witness. Answer as you will be called upon to answer to your Maker. Was it the body of your first wife or was it not?" He thundered the words, still holding his arm at full length—forefinger pointing at the prisoner's head: "Let God witness your answer—was it—or was it not?"

William Fayle suddenly threw his arms out and averted his head, as if warding off a ghostly attack; a blood-curdling wail broke from his lips and he crumpled up, became limp—like a sack—and fell, to hang inertly over the side of the witness-box, as the victims of Punch hang over the edges of the show-box—grotesquely tragic, pathetically funny.

IV

Two tall warders hastened to lift the prisoner, and two policemen had to help them carry the stricken giant from the court.

Counsel for the Crown mopped his brow with a white handkerchief. The judge's clerk whispered to the judge. The judge looked up at the court-clock.

"This trial will be resumed after lunch," he announced. "At two o'clock." And the honorable judge gathered up his robes and waddled away through the door behind his throne with the comic dignity of an elderly hen.

V

During the luncheon interval, in the prisoner's cell, the court doctor was busy trying to revive William Fayle. The brickmaker opened his eyes at the same moment that a warder brought in a trayful of food, and announced, "Dinner!"

Dinner!

The prisoner stared at it.

"Come now," the doctor persuaded, "try and eat. It

smells really good. Stew!" The doctor was a fussy little man—like a shopwalker on a percentage.

And William Fayle answered: "The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want."

The fussy little doctor looked bewildered. He said: "Yes . . . of course . . . quite so . . . Ah! . . . But this stew really *is* good. . . ."

VI

The court doctor declared the prisoner fit to be put in the box again, and the examination was resumed immediately after lunch.

The letter that the murdered man had written to prisoner was brought forward, and the prisoner answered every question with religious truthfulness. The prosecuting counsel adopted a grave, sympathetic style, eliciting the facts that prisoner was greatly perturbed at the receipt of the letter, that he had bought a revolver on the morning of the Fifth of November, that he had intended using the weapon to threaten the victim, as a means of obtaining the incriminating documents relating to his first wife, and that he had left his lodgings on the evening in question intending to keep the appointment.

But, from the moment of leaving his lodgings, prisoner remembered very little. He remembered calling at the Devonshire Hotel for a drink. He remembered going into Mr. Unwin's workshop. He remembered a quarrel . . . but nothing more.

Counsel for the Crown flourished a bundle of documents. "These are the papers referred to by the murdered man in his letter. These papers were found by Chief-Detective Marquis hidden in the attic chimney of your lodgings. I put it to you that you deliberately shot Arthur Wellington Unwin, took the papers away with you and hid them the next day."

"I don't remember."

"On the night of the Seventh of November you were served with notice to attend the inquest. That was the first intimation you had that it was known you were in some way concerned. You were observed by two police witnesses—detectives—whose evidence you have already

heard, to go to some ruined cellars in Levenshulme. Why did you go there?"

"To hide the revolver."

"You found yourself under observation and tried to escape. An accomplice—some person unknown—drew the detectives off on a wrong scent. You returned and recovered the hidden weapon. Is that true?"

"It is."

"That weapon was found on your person the same night, when you were arrested by Chief-Detective Marquis. Do you deny that?"

"No."

"The bullet extracted from the murdered man's heart corresponds exactly with the remaining bullets in that revolver." He held up the weapon. "This one. Now—in your heart—do you still believe that you are innocent?"

Counsel for the defense protested and the judge disallowed the question.

The prosecuting counsel bowed to the judge and turned again to the prisoner.

"I'll put it this way. Is it true that although you, as you say, could not remember what happened in the Back Coldacre workshop, you thought it wise to get rid of the revolver—to be on the safe side?"

"Yes."

Prosecuting counsel addressed the judge: "That, my lord, is my case."

VII

Witnesses for the defense were called.

The evidence of Florrie Radcliffe and that of her mother, as drawn out by counsel for the defense, hinted at conspiracy with the German—Wartman.

Mr. Whittaker was recalled to tell what he knew of the mysterious Mr. Wartman.

Chief-Detective Marquis was cross-examined about the finding of Wartman's jacket, the hole in the workshop wall, and the subsequent patching-up of the hole, the prints of the india-rubber soled shoes, the attempt to set fire to the workshop, the discovery of the poisoned liver and the dead rat.

Medical evidence was called to prove that the rat had died from lead poisoning, as had also the dog—Bruce. The piece of liver was stuffed with lead acetate—sugar of lead.

Eli Garside testified to the dog's barking every night of the week immediately prior to the crime.

A theatrical landlady from Romford Street brought proof that Wartman gave up his room at her house on the Fifth of November, and that he went away in a cab with his luggage at six o'clock that evening.

It began to look as if counsel for the defense would be able to establish a sound case against the missing German, when a court attendant passed a note along to the prosecuting counsel. The prosecuting counsel scribbled a note and whispered to his junior, who, in turn, passed the note to their solicitor. The solicitor for the Crown followed the attendant out of the court-room into the corridor.

When the counsel for the defense had finished with his witnesses, the prosecutor rose and begged the judge's permission to call two more persons into the box before presenting his case to the jury.

The two witnesses were separately called. They were the manager and the head waiter of the Restaurant Milano in Peter Street, Manchester, and they both alleged that Adolph Wartman—who had been an occasional customer of theirs—had dined at the Milano on the Fifth of November.

Wartman, according to the evidence given, had complained that he was at the time slightly embarrassed as to funds, and had asked the manager to book the cost of the dinner. The manager had done so and had obtained an I.O.U. from Wartman for the price of the meal—specifically, four shillings and sixpence. The I.O.U. was dated the Fifth of November.

Wartman had entered the restaurant at about eight o'clock, had played dominoes after dinner with three other customers, and had left at closing time—eleven o'clock.

Mr. Whittaker was recalled and was able to testify to Wartman's handwriting.

The hypothetical case against Wartman—so far as the

murder was concerned—broke down, and the prosecuting counsel addressed the jury.

VIII

"Gentlemen of the jury, there is no necessity for me to waste words in clarification of this hideous crime. The exhibits you have seen, the oral testimony of the numerous witnesses and the evidence and demeanor of the prisoner himself can lead you and all other sane listeners and spectators to but one conclusion.

"Out of the prisoner's own mouth you have it that he visited the murdered man's workshop on that foggy night.

"He enters that lonely place with murder in his heart; with the lethal weapon ready in his pocket, with one intention in his brain—to secure by foul means those documentary proofs of his earlier crimes, and to still for ever the voice of his accuser. The scene is perfectly prepared for the horror, the cold-blooded murder he has been dwelling on all day—since he received the letter in the morning. He knows the meeting is a secret meeting: the letter reassures him of that. Not only must he secure those damning papers, he must also destroy the one person who knows their secret. The publication of that secret would project the shadow of the gallows about him. One crime, he tells himself, will wipe out the traces of the other. The dead cannot speak.

"Remember the thick fog. Not a soul knows of his visit. Escape will be easy. It is the Fifth of November —Guy Fawkes night. Less than a hundred yards away there is a bonfire. Round about it, and in the various back-gardens, only thirty yards away, crackers are being let off. A pistol shot will mean nothing, no matter who hears it. It will only be like a penny cracker. A penny cracker—and a good man's heart stopped beating for ever. The report as of a penny cracker—and a white soul to be sped to its Maker. But does he, the murderer, think of his Maker. No. He is obsessed only by the craving —the craving to kill, and to secure those accusatory documents.

"He parleys. His victim produces the papers. There is

a loud report. A neighbor believes it to be but a penny cracker—the delight of the children round the bonfire. He drags the body of his victim across the floor and hides it under a bench. As an afterthought he places a black cloth over the body, lest it be discovered too soon. He seizes the papers, takes the key from a hook on the wall, turns out the gas and locks up the workshop. As he walks out of the deserted mews he tries to reason with himself. Without knowing it he speaks aloud. 'I threatened to shoot him like a dog,' he mumbles, 'and I did.' He is confused. He hardly knows what he is doing. A vestige of reason bids him destroy the letter he received that morning—the only evidence against him. He tears it up, scatters it in the fog. He walks quickly, anywhere, direction doesn't matter. He must get away from the scene of his crime. On . . . on . . . he dashes blindly through the fog. He sees the lights of an hotel shining through the gloom—ah! here one may buy forgetfulness. Drink! He saturates himself with alcohol. Forgetfulness! He even buys a bottle of whisky when he is forced to leave the hotel at eleven o'clock. He drinks the whole bottleful and is driven home in a hansom-cab. A glimmering of caution breaks through his drunken stupidity. He tells the driver to put him down before he reaches his lodgings. The cab-driver sees him enter the house.

"The door is opened to him by the daughter of his victim; but he is so drunk that he does not recognize her.

"The pistol is discovered in his overcoat pocket, and the stolen documents are found hidden in the attic chimney.

"You know how he tried to hide that pistol in the ruined cellars, how he was subsequently arrested with the weapon in his possession . . .

"Gentlemen of the jury, I will not insult your intelligence by framing the only obvious conclusion. I see that you have already made up your minds, that you are not going to be swayed from your just and righteous purpose by any arguments that my learned friend might put forth. There can be no question of your judgment of the facts being twisted by the spurious plea of provocation, nor can the crime be condoned by the supposition that the mur-

derer was not in his right mind. A good man has been willfully slain by an evil fiend. The only possible expiation of that crime is for the murderer to suffer the extreme penalty—death. Your verdict is 'Guilty' and William Fayle shall be hanged."

CHAPTER VIII

I

ON the afternoon of the day following the opening of the trial Ernest Fayle received his usual daily paper from the small boy at the little-used gate of the hospital grounds. He gave the boy the usual twopence, strolled behind a clump of bushes, where he was not likely to be observed with the forbidden news of the outside world, and proceeded to read.

The trial had a full page to itself. The heading was: "The Ardwick Mystery Murder," and the subheading: "Conflicting Evidence in Court Trial."

After reading the headings Ernest caught sight of a paragraph caption: William Fayle pleads "Not guilty."

For several minutes, after reading his father's name, Ernest was the victim of involuntary upheavals: he was violently, physically sick. When he recovered sufficiently to read the account of the trial he moved to a cleaner spot. He was green of face, trembling, hardly able to stand, even when leaning against the wooden wall of a tool-house. And for a long while, for perhaps an hour after reading the story, he remained in that secluded quarter of the grounds, leaning against the shed, walking weakly round it, then back again to lean, convulsively reading little scraps, hiding the paper under his overcoat, taking it out again, almost immediately, and re-reading odd scraps of the report, hardly conscious of what he did.

The air was oppressive, dark clouds banked up and obscured the sun, a distant rumble of thunder gave warning of an approaching storm. Rain began to fall in big splashes.

Ernest suddenly became alert, buttoned his overcoat up at the collar, ran to the locked gate, clambered over —somehow—tearing his overcoat as he did so on the

barbed wire woven about the top of the gate, ran down a steep rubbish tip, round the base of another, in and out amongst the hills of discarded building refuse, and on, through a network of mean streets, until he arrived at a main road where trams regularly plied.

He felt in his pockets and discovered that he had given his last twopence to the small boy for the paper. He inquired the way to the city of a man sheltering in a shop doorway, and ran on in the direction pointed out.

Forked lightning stabbed through the darkened sky, thunder crashed and rumbled, rain pelted.

Soaked to the skin, Ernest ran on—citywards, through the storm's violence.

In time he arrived at the office of a solicitor in King Street.

An aged conveyancing clerk, who was in the act of packing charges into a bill, stared suspiciously at the dripping, disheveled, wild-eyed scarecrow that demanded an interview with the boss.

Ernest—the scarecrow—leaned drunkenly against the office counter and panted out: "Quick . . . must see me . . . immediately . . . quick, man . . . for God's sake . . . quick."

Ten minutes later Ernest and the solicitor were in a hansom-cab, moving, at a greater speed than the cabby had ever believed possible of his horse, in the direction of the assize courts.

II

The jury had been locked in their room for over half an hour. The air in the court was stuffy, vitiated.

Counsel, solicitors, reporters, and spectators whispered, coughed, sweated, and waited.

At last, the gentlemen of the jury returned, solemn-faced, portentous, set about their mouths, awkward. They were just settling themselves again in the box when the same attendant who had brought the note to the prosecuting counsel tip-toed in again. This time he handed a note to the counsel for the defense.

Counsel for the defense rose and attracted the attention of the judge.

"My lord, I crave your permission to call an important witness—an eye-witness!"

There was an electric silence, and then a buzz of voices. Counsel handed up the note to the judge.

An usher called for "Silence."

The judge conferred with his clerk, and after a whispered colloquy granted counsel's request.

Ernest Fayle was called, put into the box and sworn. His face was a greeny-white, and he trembled with weakness. A nebulous stream—like an aureole—emanated from his drenched garments.

As he kissed the book a vivid lightning flash lit up the agony that was stamped on his countenance. A terrific thunder-clap followed at less than a second's interval.

Counsel for the defense addressed the last-minute witness: "You are the prisoner's son?"

Ernest turned his eyes on the stupidly staring figure in the dock for a moment before replying: "I am."

"You saw Arthur Wellington Unwin meet his death?"

"I did."

"Do you know who killed him?"

The court held its breath in a straining silence.

"I do."

From outside could be heard the swish of swiftly falling rain.

III

Counsel for the defense flashed a challenging glance across at the prosecutor, and then ordered witness to tell the court, as briefly as possible, what he knew of the tragedy.

This was Ernest Fayle's story, in effect—freed from the many interruptions and forensic side-trappings.

"On the morning of the Fifth of November I was taken ill. My mother persuaded me not to go out. During the morning I suffered with a severe headache and vomiting bouts. After lunch my mother gave me one of her headache powders; it relieved the pain, and shortly after taking it I dozed off to sleep on the sitting-room sofa.

"I was awakened by the voices of my father and mother,

and my curiosity was aroused by their several times mentioning the name 'Unwin.' My mother was reading a letter. After reading it through she handed it to my father, who put it into the right-hand outer pocket of the thick overcoat he was wearing. . . .

"I heard my mother say: 'But, surely, you'll take no notice of it.' My father answered: 'Of course I shall go. If he knows anything, I want to know *how* much he knows, and what it is.'

"My father took his overcoat off and sat down in an armchair by the fire. Presently he fell asleep. My mother went to her bedroom.

"The conversation I had overheard brought to my mind a letter I had noticed by my father's plate at breakfast-time.

"The envelope was of the same kind that Miss Unwin used—she wrote to me occasionally—and at first I thought the letter was for me. I had picked it up at the time and examined the writing. It was in a strange hand, addressed to my father.

"As I lay on the sofa I began to wonder if that letter was in any way connected with Miss Unwin. . . . I made up my mind to find out. It occurred to me that it might contain bad news of some kind that my mother thought better not to divulge to me on account of my sickness.

"While my father was asleep in the armchair I went into the lobby and felt in the pockets of his overcoat. The letter was there and I read it. It was a cruel aspersion against my parents and myself, signed by Mr. Unwin and making an appointment with my father for eight o'clock that evening in Mr. Unwin's workshop.

"In replacing the letter my hand touched something that caused me to experience definite fears that my father's meeting with Mr. Unwin might end in tragedy. I took the thing from the pocket. It was a revolver in a chamois-leather cover. The revolver was loaded in all the six chambers.

"I did not know what to do. My headache and sickness returned ten times worse than before. My mother persuaded me to go to bed. She brought me a cup of tea to my room and gave me another headache powder.

"While I was thinking out what to do I fell asleep and dreamed that my father shot Mr. Unwin. I woke up in a cold sweat. The dream so impressed me that I acted on a foolish impulse. Perhaps the drug I had taken was responsible. . . . I don't know, but I got up and took the revolver from my father's pocket, and in its place—in the chamois-leather cover—I substituted an old brass tap from a shelf in the bathroom. In size and shape and weight it was very like the revolver, and until my father took it from the case the deception would pass.

"Just as I had made the exchange I heard my father, through the closed door of the sitting-room, telling my mother he was going out. My mother replied: 'But why go so early? It's not six o'clock yet.'

"Hearing the sitting-room door being opened I slipped the revolver hastily into a pocket of one of my coats hanging up in the lobby. My father came out of the sitting-room and told me I ought to be in bed. I hurried upstairs again and got between the sheets.

"I heard my father go out. Shortly after, my mother came and sat talking with me. She wanted to go for a doctor. I told her I didn't think a doctor necessary and I begged her to give me another headache powder. It seems, however, that her supply was exhausted; but she promised to get some from the chemist's when she went out to buy a few trifles for the Sunday, which she would do as soon as the landlady came in.

"The landlady did not return until about a quarter to eight, and, almost immediately after, Miss Unwin called.

"Miss Unwin would not listen to my protests, but went off at once to fetch her mother's doctor who lived at Ardwick Green.

"My mother asked me if I minded her leaving me alone for half an hour while she went to do her bit of shopping. I told her I would be perfectly contented so long as Mrs. Horrip—the landlady—didn't come up and tell me all her troubles.

"As soon as my mother left the house I dressed myself quietly and sketchily, arranged the bolster in the bed, lengthwise, to make it appear I was still there, ran downstairs, snatched an overcoat from the pegs and

ran across the road and up the approach into Longsight Station.

"I could no longer resist the impulse to find out what was happening at the meeting between my father and Mr. Unwin, and I reckoned that by catching the 8.8 train from Longsight to London Road—which stops at Ardwick by request—I might be in time to prevent unnecessary trouble.

"My father, I knew, was not the man to eat humble pie. The calumniatory indictment of the letter he had received would undoubtedly arouse his wrath, and I dreaded to think what might happen if he were to give way to his lifelong habit of hitting out first and demanding explanations after.

"The fog had disorganized the railway schedule. The 7.38, half an hour late, was just leaving—just moving out of the station as I arrived on the platform. I jumped on to the footboard and tried to enter a compartment, but the door was locked and I had to stay where I was —hanging on to the door-handle. A few minutes later the train passed through Ardwick without stopping, but it slowed up, probably on account of the fog, sufficiently to enable me to jump off. I ran over the footbridge, across the main platform and down the steps. From leaving the house to arriving at Back Coldacre took less than ten minutes.

"As I groped my way down the mews I heard my father's voice, but not raised in anger as I had anticipated: on the contrary, he was speaking humbly, pleadingly.

"I heard him say: 'I am willing to do all you ask if you will only let me destroy those papers,' and Mr. Unwin replied: 'The papers? No, you may not have the papers.'

"Through the frosted glass of the window I could see them standing close together—blurred figures, gesticulating.

"I knocked at the door, but they took no notice. Fireworks were being let off near-by, and I suppose my knock was not heard on account of the noise. I turned the ring-latch and the door opened. I peeped inside.

"My father looked as I had never seen him look before, crushed, almost cringing. I heard him say: 'But think of what might happen if anybody else found them. Ernest is the only son who has stood by me in my misfortune, the others have deserted me. . . .'

"Then I heard a sharp whistle. Mr. Unwin spoke through a speaking-tube; he said something about his supper. While he was engaged with the speaking-tube my father picked up a bundle of papers from the desk and commenced to read them. Mr. Unwin hung up the speaking-tube and snatched the papers out of my father's hands. He waved them in my father's face and said in a loud voice—almost shouting: 'There's enough evidence here to prove everything I have told you. If you will not take steps to sever this impossible friendship between your son and my daughter, I shall be compelled to tell the truth to your son myself. I tell you to your face, sir, that you are little less than a murderer . . . and your son is a bastard.'

"My father made a sudden grab for the papers. Mr. Unwin impulsively struck my father under the jaw. My father lost his balance, tripped over a piece of machinery and fell to the floor. He lay there motionless . . . as if stunned. Mr. Unwin took a tumbler from a shelf, filled it with water and held it to my father's lips. My father started twitching his limbs. Mr. Unwin helped him to rise, handed my father's stick—which had fallen—back to him, and led him towards the door. My father turned, saw the papers on the desk and made as if to get hold of them. Mr. Unwin caught my father by the arm. My father shook him off. Mr. Unwin snatched up a revolver from the desk, but, before he could point it, my father caught his wrist and twisted it out of his grasp. The revolver fell to the floor. Then my father seemed to go mad; his face turned almost purple, his eyes protruded, bubbles of saliva formed at his lips. He picked Mr. Unwin up, lifted him to the full-arm stretch above the head—as if about to dash him violently to the ground. Then he seemed to change his mind and very gently he put Mr. Unwin on his back on the floor. He stood over him and said: 'I could crumple

you up with one hand. Be sensible and don't move. I'm going to take those papers.'

"My father picked up the papers from the desk, and at the same time Mr. Unwin picked up the revolver from the floor, leapt to his feet, pressed the nozzle of the revolver into my father's side and cried: 'Drop them or, by the living God, I'll put a bullet in your black heart.'

"I could see he meant it, and I'm sure my father too knew he would carry out his threat. The two stared at each other like madmen. My father deliberately took up the papers. Mr. Unwin cried: 'You've brought this on yourself,' and it was evident he was just about to pull the trigger when there was a sudden loud report, and Mr. Unwin staggered and fell. . . ."

IV

An awful hush descended on the crowded court. All eyes were fixed on the ghastly features of the witness. Throughout the whole story he had not made a single gesture, but the expressions that played about his face, and the subtle changes of intonation in his voice, created a greater dramatic effect than any genius of the stage could have achieved. The testimony was sincere, terribly, icily convincing. Horror gripped the hearers. The ticking of the court clock made itself heard—as if Time itself raised its voice in cynical appreciation of a good joke.

Counsel for the defense put the question:

"Do you know who fired that shot?"

"I do."

"Then you can tell the court who killed Arthur Wellington Unwin?"

Witness answered in a choking whisper:

"Yes. *I* killed him!"

And as Ernest pronounced those awful words there came a mighty thunder-burst, as if to announce the opening of Hell.

V

There was an audible intake of breath throughout the court. The judge spoke, leaning right over his desk: "What was that? You say *you* shot him?"

"Yes. The revolver was in my hand. I was not conscious of the shooting. The weapon I had taken from my father's overcoat had been in my pocket all the time, since I had put my own overcoat on when I left the house; and my hand must have taken it from my pocket and fired it without my conscious knowledge."

The voice of the defending counsel was husky with suppressed excitement: "What happened when the deceased fell?"

"My father staggered out of the workshop like a man in a trance. I hid myself flat against the wall at the end of the mews. I heard my father muttering to himself as he walked away. I stayed there for some minutes expecting to be caught, and not caring. But nobody came. I went into the workshop, took off my shoes, dragged the body under the bench, put Mr. Unwin's own revolver by his hand, spread out a black cloth, that I found covering a machine, over the edge of the bench, in such a way as to conceal the body, took the papers and a key from the desk, put my shoes on, turned out the gas, locked up the door of the workshop, threw away the key, and was just about to leave the mews when I heard footsteps approaching. I edged along the wall to the opposite side of the yard. I heard some one trying the workshop door; and then whoever it was went away again. I walked quietly out of the mews and then ran to Ardwick Station. A train was stopped almost on the catch-points. A porter told me it was a stopping train to Stockport and was waiting for the down-express from London to pass. I crossed the line, unobserved in the fog, and entered an empty compartment. Almost immediately after that the express passed and my train moved on. I alighted at Longsight, gave the ticket collector sixpence, ran to the lodgings, let myself in with the latch-key and went upstairs to bed.

"I had just time to hide the revolver and the papers

under the mattress at the foot of the bed when my mother returned, and directly following her the doctor arrived. My pulses were beating rapidly, my head was aching and I felt myself slipping into unconsciousness.

"The next thing I remember was the strange doctor leaning over me. He gave me a draught of medicine which cleared my head. I recalled what had happened, but I could not believe it real: it seemed like a horrible nightmare. But when the doctor left my room I got out of bed and felt under the mattress. The papers and the pistol were there and I knew then that . . . that I had killed a man. I examined the pistol and found one of the cartridges to be spent. Then I cast about for a hiding-place. The safest place for the concealment of the papers and pistol would be the chimney, I thought; and as there was a fire in the grate of my room I went upstairs to the attic, where the landlady kept some old furniture and our traveling gear. I could scarcely walk, my head was beginning to trouble me again, and I felt sleepy; but I managed, somehow, to crawl up to the attic. I hid the papers on the little ledge in the flue, and I was just going to hide the pistol also when the door suddenly opened and my mother appeared holding a lighted candle.

"She snatched the revolver from me and helped me down to my room.

"I remember nothing after that until I awoke in the fever hospital at Monsall—it must have been some days after. Then for a long time I must have been very ill.

"One day, when I had recovered somewhat, the nurse told me I had a visitor and pointed to the window where people were looking through into the ward. I recognized Miss Unwin. She smiled and waved to me. Every Saturday she came, and I began to think the tragedy was only a vivid dream caused by my fever.

"It was only this morning that I read in a newspaper of the trial here. And I knew then that the murder was not a mere hallucination. I knew that my father was on trial for his life for a deed which I had committed. I escaped from the hospital and went right away to a solicitor.

"The evidence I have given is the truth."

VI

The counsel for the Crown cross-examined Ernest Fayle for over an hour, but the witness never varied his story.

The papers next morning came out with startling headlines:

ARDWICK MURDER MYSTERY

Sensational Dénouement in Court

CHAPTER IX

I

WILLIAM FAYLE was discharged on a verdict of "Not guilty" at the end of the third day of the trial. Religious mania caught him in a grip from which he never recovered, and he spent the remainder of his life in a private lunatic asylum at Cheadle, under treatment. The expenses of that treatment—until the patient died ten years later—were met by checks from a certain Manchester solicitor named Tarling, who, when questioned, said he was not in a position to divulge the identity of William Fayle's supporter. Dr. Logan visited the asylum every Saturday afternoon . . . until William Fayle died.

The man Wartman was never heard of again, and the mystery of Bruce's death and the patched-up wall was never solved except by Marquis's theory—which we already know.

Ernest—after his father's trial—was detained in the prisoners' hospital attached to the Strangeways Jail. Shock and exposure, while in an already devitalized condition, had caused the lighting up of an aortic aneurism, and he died before trial.

Ernest Fayle. . . .

. . . . ?

II

One day, in the following summer, Ronny Waddington summoned up courage to propose to Anne. They were sitting together after tennis in the little summer-house at the end of the Waddingtons' garden.

Anne looked very seriously at Ronny and replied:

"You're a dear boy, Ronny; you're clean-limbed, wholesome and thoroughly English, and we've known each other and liked each other since we were kiddies. I hate to hurt you . . . but, Ronny . . . I don't *love* you—not like that, I mean. I love Sam—because he's

my brother, and I love you somewhat the same way—more than I could love an ordinary friend, but I don't love with the capital L sort of love. Do you understand, Ronny? Do try."

And Ronny rejoined: "Well . . . I suppose . . . as a matter of cold callous fact I never thought that . . . of course, you're miles and miles beyond . . . But, I mean to say, in time . . . You see my point . . . I know I'm an awful ass . . . I've always loved you, Anne, always. I don't know what I shall do if . . . And the guvnor's keen as mustard. He said, 'Sail in and try your luck,' so I . . . sailed in, y'see. Now I've to sail out. That's what it comes to . . . Ah, well . . . that, to all intents and purposes, appears to be *that* . . . and there it is, I s'pose."

Anne said: "I'm so glad you *really* understand, Ronny."

There was a strained silence. Then Anne spoke in almost a whisper, with a slight tremor: "Ronny, we're going to be good pals like we were, aren't we?"

"Oh . . . rather . . . Great Scott! . . . I should say so . . . Why not?"

She offered him her hand, and said: "There, that's a bargain. And, Ronny," she just breathed it, "if you'll promise to forget immediately . . . I'd like you to kiss me . . . just once, on the cheek." She pointed to a particularly inviting dimple: "Here."

Ronny kissed her very gently, and when he looked at her eyes they were full of tears that were nearly falling.

"Please go away now, Ronny," Anne pleaded, "I must be alone for a while."

As he turned to go she asked: "We *are* going to be good pals . . . aren't we? Promise."

And Ronny promised.

III

Anne, Polly, and Mr. Whittaker were having tea one Sunday in September at the Whittakers' house—over the chemist's shop.

Anne was saying: "But can't you persuade him, uncle? He must be mad to let all that money go."

Mr. Whittaker replied: "I tried to talk him round till I was blue in the face, but it's no use. The man's as stubborn as a pot mule. If he doesn't claim it within the next few days the estate goes to charity. He says he's well enough off as it is."

"There must be an awful battle going on in that man's brain," Polly put in. "He was brought up in Aberdeen, you know, and it must hurt him to let that fortune go a-begging. But once he makes up his mind there's no moving him."

"What's happening about the mule, uncle?" Anne asked. "I mean the machine mule, not the human one. He had to remake the model himself and do all the business connected with the patenting and selling. He'll take half, I suppose?"

Mr. Whittaker answered: "Look here, Anne, I'm sick to death of the man and his principles, and I wash my hands of the whole affair. He refuses to touch a penny of the proceeds of the mule."

Polly said: "He's mad."

Mr. Whittaker added: "He's a fool — a blithering idiot."

Anne's eyes flashed and she retorted with heat: "How dare you say that of him, uncle? And you too, Polly? He thinks he's playing the game. He *is* playing the game, and I don't care what you two think of him—I think he's . . ."

"He's *what?*" Polly inquired innocently, or rather with an affected innocence.

Anne helped herself to jam, and replied: "Well, never mind . . . I'll reserve my opinion."

IV

That same evening, before going home, Anne called at the house of Dr. Logan.

"Is the doctor in?" she inquired of the maid who opened the door.

"Yes, Miss Unwin, he's in the surgery seeing his patients. Shall I tell him?"

Anne reflected and then said: "No, don't tell him. I'll just wait and take my turn."

So the maid ushered Anne into the waiting-room. Three patients were reading old copies of *Punch* and the *English Illustrated Magazine*. Presently, after the three had separately taken their turns, the maid announced: "Now, Miss Unwin, please," and Anne went through the green baize door into the surgery.

Dr. Logan looked surprised and puzzled at Anne's entry.

"I hope your mother's not ill again," he said, after the usual formalities.

"No . . . it isn't about mother. She's doing splendidly. It's about you."

Dr. Logan wrinkled his forehead and echoed: "Me?"

Anne perked her head sideways as though examining a curiosity, or a painting executed by a friend—a thing one is uncertain about.

"Uncle John says you're a blithering idiot and Polly says you're mad. Is it true?"

Dr. Logan toyed nervously with a stethoscope. Anne noticed that his hands trembled.

"I want to know," Anne continued, "why you won't take your proper share of the mule money. If it hadn't been for you there wouldn't be *any* mule money. You remade the whole model and did all the work."

He dropped the stethoscope on the desk, hesitated, picked up a paper-knife and replied: "I don't feel I should be justified in taking any share in it at all. It was your father's invention. I only copied what he had already discovered."

"But mother won't touch a penny of the money if you don't take your share. If you won't take half, which you really ought to take, you must at least stick to your agreement with father and accept your legitimate quarter-share."

He drew lines on the blotting-pad with the paper-knife. He shook his head.

Anne's right foot played an impatient tattoo on the linoleum.

"Oh, Alan Logan," she bit out, "you are a hard, stubborn *wretch*. Why *are* you a wretch? Can't you understand that *we* can't take more than our share? Do you think *we* have no pride? or what is it? I'll tell you

something. I hear from uncle John that you're going to refuse the fortune that Dr. Beamish left you. I call that cruel of you; downright cruel. You know perfectly well that Dr. Beamish *wanted* you to have it . . . because he loved you. We want you to take your share of the mule money because . . . because . . . Well . . . If you don't take it we shall let that go to charity too."

Dr. Logan's voice hinted at emotions painfully repressed, his jaw was quivering and his knuckles showed white.

"I don't want more money than I have," he said slowly, "I have my work . . ."

"Is work, then, the only object in life?"

"For me . . . yes."

"Others . . . Not every one is content with that; you ought to consider others. You might marry some day . . ."

A vein in the doctor's forehead pulsated noticeably, his face tightened.

"I shall never marry," he said slowly.

"Why? Is it because you have no heart, or is it because you close your eyes and your ears, and harden yourself and make yourself into a wretch? Are you going to turn love out of your life? Or is it that you cannot understand what love means, what sacrifice it can compel, what humiliation it can suffer, what agonies it can endure, and what glories it can bring, and what faith it can inspire?"

He staggered to his feet, visibly trembling. He walked across the surgery and opened the door leading on to the corridor

"Please go," he pleaded. Then almost peremptorily with an unnatural, choking voice, he added: "Go . . . oh . . . for God's sake, leave me . . ."

Anne pulled the door savagely out of his grasp and slammed it to with a violent bang. She set her back against it and looked up at him with an extraordinary glowing fierceness in her eyes.

She spoke deliberately and imperiously: "Alan Logan, you will never forget this moment as long as you live. I'll *make* you remember it. You're a young man, you're successful, you're going to be still more successful—more

than you dream of—you're going to rise. Energy and will, such as you have, cannot but command success; but imagine what that success will mean. It will mean distinction among men, riches, honors; but those rewards will mean nothing. Work as you will, you will never know happiness. Success will become a habit. You will never know contentment. You will become the slave of your work. Ambition will flog you. Memories will torture you, for you will never be able to hide the knowledge from yourself that you have ridden roughshod over God's paradise and trampled His grace into the dust. If you believe evil to be hereditary, then who amongst us can stretch out a hand in claim of virtue? Your most blessed birthright is your measure of resistance—as it is with all men and women. I charge you, Alan Logan, to search well your heart and to answer me truthfully. Look at me. Look into my eyes. Let me *see* the truth."

Anne drew him towards her, holding him tightly by the lapels of his coat. Her face was radiant, innocent, forceful, commanding. Her voice was inspired by the over-soul of womankind. Her strength was of the nature of destiny itself. Her power was of polarity—as of magnetized steel. Hers was the way of life—the way of woman for her man.

"I love you, Alan. I love you as God made woman to love man—completely, without reservation of any kind. I tell you this because I know you will never be my man unless I do tell you, because I *know* you love me, because I know you *want* me, as I *want* you. I tell you because it hurts me and belittles me, because it is the lowest humiliation and the highest sacrifice a woman can make. Look at me and let me tell you again . . . Alan, I love you . . ."

He looked into Anne's eyes through the blinding mist in his own. He covered his face with his hands—great ugly hands. He solemnly knelt at her feet and, as solemnly and simply, tenderly, adoringly, he kissed the hem of her gown.

Anne put her soft hands under his face and tried to draw him to his feet. He did not move.

She knelt facing him.

"Tell me, Alan, tell me."

For minutes they knelt facing each other, strengthless in the Glory which is also the Power and the Kingdom.

And when he tried to say: "I love you," his lips made no sound.

But Anne heard.

THE END